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THE MONTH

MAY 1958

'HIS BLOOD COLOURS MY CHEEK'

DAME EDITH SITWELL

**SIX NEW LETTERS OF
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS**

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*'His Blood colours my cheek'*¹

FOR FR. M. C. D'ARCY, S.J.

HIS BLOOD colours my cheek.
Ah! were but those Flames the tongue wherewith I speak
Of the small ambitions I have seen
Rise in the common street
Where the bell that tolls in Bedlam tells the hour!
Yet still great flowers like violet thunders break
In air, and still the flower of the five-petalled senses
Is surely ours.
I, an old dying woman, tied
To the winter's hopelessness
And to a wisp of bone
Clothed in the old world's outworn foolishness—
A poor ape-cerement
With all its rags of songs, loves, rages, lusts, and flags of death
Say this to you,—
My father, Pithecanthropus Erectus, your head once filled with
primal night
(You, who stood at last after the long centuries
Of the anguish of the bone
Reaching upwards towards the loving, the all-understanding
sun),
And to you, who no more walk on all fours like the first
Gardener and Grave-digger, yet are listening
Where, born from zero, little childish leaves and lives begin:
I hear from the dust the small ambitions rise,
The white ant whispering "Could I be man's size,
My cylinders would stretch three hundred feet
In air, and man would look on me with different eyes!"
And there the Brazilian insect all day long
Challenges the heat with its empty noise:
"Were I as great as man, my puny voice
Would stretch from pole to pole, no other sound
Be audible. By this dictatorship the round
World would be challenged—from my uproar would a new
Civilisation of the dust be born, the old world die like dew."

¹ A saying of St. Agnes.

I watch the new race of rulers, the snub-nosed, the vain, four-
 handed,
 Building a new Babel for the weak
 Who walk with the certainty of the somnambulist
 Upon the tight-rope stretched over nothingness—
 Holding a comet and the small ape-dust in their fist
 Over the grave where the heart of man is laid.
 I hear the empty straw whine to the street
 Of the ghost that has no bread, the lonely ghost
 That lacks prosperity: "I am your Wheat:
 Come, and be fed."
 But I see the sun, large as the journeying foot of man,—see the
 great traveller
 Fearing no setting, going straight to his destination.
 So am I not dismayed.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

His Blood colours my cheek—
 No more eroded by the seas of the world's passions, greeds, I rise
 As if I never had been Ape, to look in the compassionate, the
 all-seeing Eyes.

EDITH SITWELL

NOTES

"At one time it was . . . the practice, in spite of his recognised and obvious
 connections with apes and monkeys (then called *Quadrumana* or four-handed
 ones) to relegate man to a separate order called *Bimana* (i.e. two-handed)." *Man
 as an Animal*, by W. C. Osman Hill (Hutchinson's University Library,
 Biological Sciences).

"According to a statement in an ancient Chinese work of about 200 B.C. a
 so-called man of the Heu Yeung kingdom appears from his upturned nose to
 be a snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus*) (*vide* Lydekker, 1903)." *Op. cit.*

SIX NEW LETTERS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Edited with Notes by
GRAHAM STOREY

THE LETTERS that follow have become known since the second edition of *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by C. C. Abbott (1956). Those to Katharine Tynan are printed from photostats kindly supplied by the University of Texas. The two letters to Fr. Hopkins's father, Manley Hopkins, were published in Lance Sieveking's autobiography, *The Eye of the Beholder* (Hulton Press, 1957), part of the second letter in facsimile. Acknowledgments are due to the above; to Mr. A. Ross Williamson for his information about the whereabouts of the letters to Katharine Tynan; and to the holders of the copyright, the Society of Jesus, for permission to publish these letters here.

Hopkins wrote the earlier letter to his father during his second year of philosophy at St. Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst. The date of the later letter is clearly 1884: he wrote to Bridges from Furbough House, near Galway, a fortnight later. G. M. H. had taken up his appointment as Professor of Greek, University College, Dublin, that February, and was now on holiday after his first period of strenuous examining. The paper on statistics he refers to is probably the one he rewrote later for the *Lyceum* (letter to Bridges, 25 September 1888); on 19 October he wrote to him, "My little Paper on *Statistics and Free Will* obeyed the general law and did not appear." Manley Hopkins's paper is not known, but in 1887 he published a short book called *The Cardinal Numbers*, and to this G. M. H. contributed a letter (see *The Letters of G. M. H. to Robert Bridges*, edited by C. C. Abbott, 1935, p. 294, and note, pp. 321-2).

Katharine Tynan (1861-1931) appears in several of Hopkins's letters to Bridges, Dixon and Patmore; and two of her letters to him (dated 6 November and 27 December 1886) are in *Further*

Letters of G. M. H., edited by C. C. Abbott, Appendix III. They met, at the end of October or beginning of November 1886, in J. B. Yeats's studio in St. Stephen's Green, to which G. M. H. had been taken by Fr. Matthew Russell. Katharine Tynan describes the meeting and the impression Hopkins made on her in her reminiscences, *Memories* (1924), pp. 155-6. Her second volume of poems, the subject of two of the letters that follow, was *Shamrocks* (1887). It was praised by the *Westminster* and *Dublin Reviews* and, together with her first volume, *Louise de la Vallière and other Poems* (1885), was the main subject of an enthusiastic article, *Two Irish Triumphs*, in the *Irish Monthly*, 1888, by Fr. Russell. In 1893 Katharine Tynan married H. A. Hinkson, later resident magistrate in Co. Mayo; she became a prolific novelist and published several more books of verse. W. B. Yeats's letters to her were edited by Roger McHugh (Dublin, 1953).

Fr. Matthew Russell, S.J. (1834-1912), mentioned in two of the letters, was the nephew of Newman's friend, Charles Russell, and younger brother of the future Lord Chief Justice, Lord Russell of Killowen. He was ordained in 1864; and from 1873 to his death edited the *Irish Monthly*. Here he published some of Yeats's early poems and fostered the work of Katharine Tynan and many other young writers of the Irish literary revival. In 1886 and 1887 he published Latin versions by G. M. H. of two songs from *The Tempest*: "Full fathom five thy father lies" and "Come unto these yellow sands" (see *Poems of G. M. H.*, third edition by W. H. Gardner, pp. 196-7). He wrote several books of verse, mainly religious, and a biography of his three sisters, who became nuns. During Hopkins's period as Professor at University College, Fr. Russell was one of the two priests in charge of the resident students, and later Spiritual Director to the community. The chapter given to him in Katharine Tynan's *Memories* shows him as a devoted, attractively eccentric priest, with a great capacity for friendship. G. M. H. must have seen quite a lot of him, but there is no evidence that he ever showed him his own poems.

I

My dearest Father,

This is to wish you all a happy Christmas and new year. I had meant to have been longer but now I have put it off to

within a few minutes of post time. I am much obliged for my mother's letter, which has come two days too soon. The above¹ is a faithful picture and before it was printed seems to have been a pretty drawing. On the right of the turrets in the distance you see a square thing on a mound. That is Clitheroe Castle built on one great rock said to be an "erratic boulder" brought by iceberg. The town is Clitheroe. The hill above is Pendle but not done justice to. To the left are a low range of fells. We begin our short holidays today. With best love and wishes to all believe me your loving son Gerard M. Hopkins.

Stonyhurst (no need to write *Stoneyhurst*) Whalley Dec. 23rd, 1871.

II

July 5 1884² Castlebar,
County Mayo.

My dearest Father,—

I write from this remote place to wish you many happy returns of Monday. I have got a circular ticket which will take me over [a] great part of Ireland. To be at Castlebar was no item of my plan, but fortune does and should play a great part in travel. (More by token I have written a paper on Statistics, from another point of view than yours, which perhaps might appear in the *Atlantis*, when the new *Atlantis* appears: the old *Atlantis*³ was published when Cardinal Newman was Rector of the Catholic University and was brilliant, but did not last long.) I left Dublin this morning meaning to go to Westport on the coast, but fell in with a clergyman who, finding me to be a friend of a friend of his invited me to stay with him, which I gladly did. In the house live 3 curates, he being the eldest of them. I am to go by private car to Letterfrack tomorrow and my driver, if after looking into my purse he agrees to be so, is momentarily expected to the conference.

At Letterfrack on the Atlantic some of our people are staying. When I am tired of them or they of me I go on through

¹ The writing-paper is headed by a small printed engraving of Stonyhurst College.

² MS. 1844.

³ The *Atlantis*, a Register of literature and science conducted by Members of the Catholic University of Ireland: 1858-63; suspended 1864-69; final number Feb. 1870. The "new *Atlantis*" does not seem to have appeared.

Connemara to Furbogh or Ferbo in Galway Bay, where there are others of ours, and thence to Killarney, where there are again others, and so by degrees home. Part of the difficulty of telling you what I am doing lies in the pen, which makes it a labour to write.

The weather is close and sultry. There was a heavy rain last night but all dried up. Thunderclouds hang about. Great part of the population are very pleasantly shod in their bare heels and stockinged in their bare shins. How gladly would I go so! The struggle I keep up with shoemakers, murderers by inches, I may say ever embitters my life.

It being market day the streets were full of people, but hitherto I have heard no Irish talked. But every one in the country parts and most markedly the smallest children, if asked a question, answer it by repeating the words without yes or no. "Were you at school on Friday?"—"I was, sir." "You would be afraid to go in where the bull is!"—"I would not, sir." The effect is very pretty and pointed.

John Collins and I are agreed over our drive, 36 Irish miles, which are, so far as I can reckon, about 46 English, for 17s. and driver 7s. 6d. I do not know that it is dear, but I feel that it is ruinous in my impoverished condition.

With best love to all believe me your loving son, Gerard Manley Hopkins S.J.

If you have not bought argosy braces don't: they are very ingenious and if you spent your life in picking up horseshoes, as Sandford¹ did and Merton would not, you would find them convenient, but you will never draw an easy breath from the day you put them on. I shall get rid of my cuirass on the earliest opportunity.

III

University College,
St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin.

Nov. 14 1886

My dear Miss Tynan,—This is to tell you that Bridges has

¹ Harry Sandford, the virtuous farmer's son, and Tommy Merton, the spoilt rich boy, in *The History of Sandford and Merton*, by Thomas Day. A Work intended for the Use of Children. 3 Vols., 1783-89.

published some other things besides those you have,¹ namely a set of Sonnets called *the Growth of Love* and some lyrics and miscellaneous pieces. These were published in pamphlet form, not even sent to the reviews, and are now withdrawn or not to be had: some were printed at Mr. Daniel's fancy press.² They will no doubt be republished in due time and then, I hope, you will read them, for he has done nothing better. Some of the sonnets are as beautiful as anything of that kind in English next to Shakespeare and Milton. I wd send you one sample,³ the best perhaps of all, but I cannot remember it in one place, and having asked Bridges to send me the missing lines, for I am turning it into Latin, I have had no answer yet. Some of the short lyrics have the exquisiteness of Herrick and more of earnest feeling. I send one favourite.⁴

Fr. Russell has not hitherto sent either your poems or his own.⁵

I am, my dear Miss Tynan, yours very truly Gerard M. Hopkins S.J.

¹ The three books for which Katharine Tynan had thanked G. M. H. on 6 November were *Prometheus the Firegiver* (Daniel Press, Oxford, 1883), *Nero*, Pt. 1 (1885) and *Eros and Psyche* (1885). *The Growth of Love*, A Poem in Twenty-four Sonnets, 1876, was reviewed with high praise in the *Academy*, 17 June 1876, as an "unobtrusive pamphlet," but otherwise passed unnoticed. Bridges's other anonymous pamphlets were: (i) *Poems*, 1873 (suppressed by the author); (ii) *Carmen Elegiacum de Nosocomio Sti. Bartolomaei Londiniensi*, 1876; (iii) *Poems by the Author of the Growth of Love*, First Series (2nd edn.), 1880; Second Series, 1879; Third Series, 1880.

² H. V. O. Daniel (1836-1919; later Provost of Worcester College) included seventeen poems from the three Series cited above in his *Poems* by Robert Bridges (Daniel Press, 1884). The remainder of the twenty-four shorter poems, selected by Bridges, came from a Fourth Series, written c.1882, but not published before. Most of these were included in *Shorter Poems*, 1890.

³ "In all things beautiful, I cannot see" (No. V, *Love Strengthened*, in *The Growth of Love*, 1876); final form, *Poetical Works* (1898), No. 31. Hopkins had sent Bridges the first draft of his Latin version on 31 October 1886 and asked him to send the lines he had forgotten (9-11); but there is no evidence that he did so, before arranging for the new Daniel Press edition (1889) to be sent to G. M. H. in May 1889 (see *Further Letters of G. M. H.*, p. 433).

⁴ The song, "Thou didst delight my eyes," first published in *Poems*, Third Series (1880), No. II. The copy enclosed with the letter is almost identical with the new version in *Poetical Works*, II (1899), p. 106, incorporating the major change in ll. 2-4 made as a result of G. M. H.'s criticism (letter of 1 February 1882), but has these variants; *made* for *make* in l. 9; transposition of *hearts* and *ears* in ll. 9 and 10; and *shed* for *poured* in l. 15.

⁵ Fr. Russell had published two books of religious verse in 1880: *Emmanuel* and *Madonna*. Selections from these were reprinted in his *Idylls of Killowen* (1899) and *Vespers and Compline* (1900).

IV

University College,
St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin.

June 2 1887

My dear Miss Tynan,—

Thank you very much for yr. elegant new volume,¹ which I hope more inwardly to value when I have read it all. The reading of the earlier pages gives me the impression of a freer and surer hand than before. You seem also to employ more sparingly the form characteristic of our time which consists in two short epithets like "gold soft hair," "warm wet cheek," and so on. This being my busiest time of year or at least the most anxious, when I prepare my examination papers, I cannot now write more; but when I meet you there is a metrical point I should like to remonstrate with you upon. Meantime I remain yours sincerely Gerard M. Hopkins S.J.

P.S. I wrote a longish letter yesterday on the metrical matter, but have destroyed it, and think it better to deal with it by word of mouth.

V

University College,
St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin.

July 8 1887

My dear Miss Tynan,

—In replying to your kind bidding I have to say what you must bear in mind about everything, that this is with me the busiest time of the year and that the work of examination leaves leisure and strength (of mind at all events) for no other thing. During it all is haste and pressure, before it all anxiety and worry. The Spring therefore went by and I did not attempt to visit you. And now the only chance would be a day stolen from the Papers. This is of itself desirable and even necessary, but I have promised if possible to visit a sick man at Howth and that is what I must first do. If later I should find an evening I will try and reach Whitehall.²

¹ *Shamrocks* (Kegan, Paul, Trench, 1887).

² Katharine Tynan's farmhouse in Clondalkin, near Dublin. G. M. H. visited her there once with Fr. Russell (*Memories*, *op. cit.*, p. 155).

I do not think it well to concert anything with Fr. Russell: our conveniences would then have to wait on each other and this would be changing the difficult into the impossible. I expect in August to go to England for a short while¹ and if I do not see you before then still I might after. I ought to let you know the day I am coming, but I do not want to be met, thank you: it would not suit me. I now see what an ungraciously worded note I am writing, which yet I must send and make things better (or worse) by word of mouth. I am sincerely yours Gerard M. Hopkins.

VI

University College,
St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin.

Sept. 15 1888.

My dear Miss Tynan,

—Thank you kindly for the elegant photograph you have sent me. It does not represent you quite as I think of you (Mr. Yeats' portrait² does that: I do not agree with his slight method of execution in that work or in others, but his portraits are nevertheless strikingly artistic; works of genius, I believe): it is however both a faithful likeness and a pleasing picture. Willie Coyne³ agrees: he says it is like, but would not give a true impression to a stranger.

I have never written to you about your last volume, as I ought to have done, nor can I now say more than a word. In this volume the first poem⁴ and the longest is also the best in my

¹ G. M. H. was on holiday in England for two to three weeks that August.

² J. B. Yeats's portrait of Katharine Tynan was painted in 1886 and exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy, 1887; now in the Hugh Lane Collection, Dublin Municipal Art Gallery. Reproduced as frontispiece to her *Twenty-five Years: Reminiscences* (1913).

³ Probably William Patrick Coyne (1867–1904), then in his final year as a resident student at University College. He was an active contributor to the *Lyceum*, one of his first articles in which was a severe review of *Shamrocks*. Fellow of the Royal University, 1897; Professor of Political Economy, University College, 1899; then became the first Director of Statistics in the Government's new Department of Agriculture, 1900. His early death was mourned in the Irish Parliament as a national loss. See *A Page of Irish History: the Story of University College, Dublin, 1883–1909* (Dublin, 1930).

⁴ "The Pursuit of Diamuid and Grainne."

judgment. You there seize your subject with ease, zest, and mastery. It appears to me that a set story, a matter already made (as the matter commonly is for the dramatist) best suits your powers and that you must have felt that yourself, you strike your effect without hesitation, your metres vary with unfailing aptness to the incident or feeling, you even treat your characters like creatures, as one who works in a world of his very own.¹ In the smaller poems of impression and feeling you linger on a thought as if uncertain how far the stroke has gone home. And then the rich and decorative style of diction which you, like the Rossettis, Swinburne, and the modern school in general, employ is never so advantageous and in place as where applied to matter which may be taken as lying at a certain distance from you rather than when it comes as if embodied in the thought from the first. This last manner (which was Wordsworth's manner for instance) is more spontaneous, it is true, but it is not compatible with a formed style and the free use of a style: we want matter to treat and it is fresher when it is not of our own making. I cannot help thinking that your own experience will respond to what I am saying. I should myself prefer to think your next volume² was to be some story or other theme on a considerable scale with plenty of features of its own independent of any impressions we may have about them and that your achievement was to be the brilliant treatment of those features [rather] than a number of impression-pieces however rich in which a vague and evanescent state of mind is covered with a great deal of concrete imagery.

It is natural for you to choose subjects from Irish legend. They have their features of interest and beauty, but they have one great drawback: it is the intermixture of monstrosities (as of a man throwing a stone one hundred others could not lift or a man with a leaping pole over-vaulting an army),* for these things are deeply inartistic and destroy all seriousness and verisimilitude.

Believe me yours sincerely Gerard M. Hopkins.

*You have evaded the difficulty by lightness of touch.

¹ Yeats had written of Katharine Tynan's Celtic romances, in the *Gael*: "I find, also, no imitation—a rare spontaneity, once or twice marred by an over-weighting of picturesque detail, an originality without caprice or any pride of strangeness" (quoted in *Two Irish Triumphs*, *op. cit.*).

² Her next volume was *Ballads and Lyrics*, 1891.

ST. BERNADETTE

By
JAMES BRODRICK

BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS, canonised on 8 December, 1933, is one of the most surprising saints in the Church's calendar. Of her the late Fr. Herbert Thurston wrote:

In all the annals of sanctity it would be hard to find the counterpart [of her history]. She did nothing out of the common, she said nothing memorable, she gathered no followers around her, she had in the ordinary sense no revelations, she did not prophesy or read men's secret thoughts, she was remarkable for no great austerities or striking renunciations, or marvellous observance of rule, or, conspicuous zeal for souls. And yet . . . for all future time, as long as this earth shall last, the Holy Sacrifice will be offered in her honour, and petitions will be addressed to her to intercede with God, the common Father of us all.¹

These are the carefully pondered words of a very great scholar whose chief field of study was the lives of the saints. What he says is completely endorsed by a more recent authority on Bernadette and Lourdes, Dr. René Laurentin, who maintains that her holiness was not a particular form of sanctity, but sanctity free of accessories and reduced to its essence, the sanctity without human grandeur or accidental charisms, which was that of the Holy Family at Nazareth. From this point of view, Dr. Laurentin continues, the sanctity of Bernadette could be said to mark a turning point in the annals of hagiography. She herself had no patience with lives of saints which dehumanised them and spoke only of their revelations and miracles. She held that the faults of the saints should be pointed out as well as the means they took to overcome them, for that would be a real help to us.²

Bernadette was in fact a new type of saint, whose very ordinari-

¹ THE MONTH, December 1933.

² Laurentin, *Sens de Lourdes*, 1955, pp. 86-7. It is worth noting that Fr. R. H. Steuart anticipated this interpretation in his study of Bernadette, *Diversities in Holiness*, 1936, pp. 168-70.

ness is her great attraction. Her story, at once simple and sublime, is so familiar that the merest bald sketch of her life will be enough for the refreshment of memory. She was born at Lourdes on 7 January, 1844, the eldest child of two easy-going, illiterate millers, François and Louise Soubirous, kindly, Christian people whose reputation was not of the highest among their neighbours. As a result of their shiftlessness and mild addiction to the bottle, they lost their mill and were reduced eventually to almost complete destitution. At the age of six, Marie-Bernarde, known to everybody in the Soubirous's small circle as Bernadette, became subject to attacks of asthma and four years later fell victim to the cholera raging then in Lourdes. So was the poor child's health permanently undermined and her growth retarded. At the time of the Apparitions in 1858, when she had passed her fourteenth birthday, she looked no more than twelve or less and was only four and a half feet tall. In November 1859, her mother told a priest inquirer that "she was hardly ever free from ill-health and suffering of one kind or another down to the day when she was favoured with the vision of Our Lady." After that great day, Louise Soubirous continued, her health had become progressively worse: "From time to time her body becomes so distended that she can no longer fasten her dress. Her cough is incessant and harassing while she is suffering from these distensions, and the attack lasts for three weeks or a month together, quitting her only to recur with renewed violence."¹

In 1857, the family, mother, father and four children, were evicted from their last poor lodging in Lourdes through inability to pay the rent, and had to fall back on the charity of a relative, André Sajoux, tenant of a former town gaol, who allowed them the use of one ground-floor room, the notorious *cachot*, where drunks and other undesirables had been locked-up in the past. In the small walled yard outside were a dunghill and cesspool, Bernadette's only prospect from the single window for seven months of her young life. It is touching to find that Louise Soubirous tried hard to keep this insanitary hole as clean as might be, though for all her battles with them the vermin would return. Bernadette when not crippled with her asthma was her mother's

¹ Quoted by Fr. Thurston from a rare little book, *La Grotte des Pyrénées*, published at Lourdes in 1862 by a certain Abbé Azun de Bernétas. THE MONTH, July 1924.

great ally in this unending campaign. Sajoux who lived upstairs over their heads testified that the Soubirous, though half starving and never properly warm, always ended their hard days with evening prayers before retiring to their miserable beds. The parents undoubtedly had their faults but must have been fine people down deep to have retained their human dignity and integrity in those appalling circumstances. It was said of them that they would rather die than beg, and the children, though poorly clad in old patched garments, were kept clean and, as far as possible, neat. The scarf which Bernadette wore tightly over her dark hair was originally striped, but the colours in it had run through incessant washing. Her big billowing skirt, which once in innocent vanity she tried to arrange like the crinolines worn by the fashionable young ladies of Lourdes, was kept by her own diligent fingers in good repair and thoroughly brushed. She was always gifted with her needle, and in later years worked really beautiful lace for the albs of priests, examples of which are still to be seen.

In September 1857, the farmer's wife at the village of Bartrès, less than three miles from Lourdes, who had suckled Bernadette as a baby on a strictly commercial basis, because her own young mother (Louise was only seventeen at the time) had been unable to do so on account of an accident, asked for the services of her former foster-child on board and lodging terms. Bernadette's parents were only too glad to get her out of the fetid atmosphere of the *cachot*, even though it meant a severe pang to part with her who was the one comfort of their dreadful existence. So off she went with her few pitiable belongings to slave from morning to night at kitchen chores, or looking after the farmer's small children, or tending from time to time his sheep and lambs. Her only reference to the third very temporary occupation was that she loved the smallest lambs best. In spite of their subsequent loud protestations of love for Bernadette, after she had become celebrated, there is every indication that the farmer and his wife overworked her, and they certainly neglected her religious instruction, in spite of their express promise to her parents. Another, older servant of the family testified that when she brought Bernadette to Bartrès, she had assured her parents on behalf of her employers that she would be sent to the village school to learn her catechism, of which till then she had been taught nothing.

But work prevented her from being sent [continued this witness], and I do not think that she was even given time to attend Sunday school. The mistress of the house tried to teach her a little in the evenings, before bed, but poor Bernadette was very slow to learn, and even though the same word was repeated to her three or four times she still could not retain it. It was so bad that her foster-mother said to her, "You will never learn anything," and threw the catechism book aside in exasperation. All the same, Bernadette knew the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the I believe in God, though she missed out a few words in the I believe. We were good friends and never had a disagreement. *Elle était si brave!*¹

Owing to the child's persistent ill-health and the need of her at home to look after her younger brothers and sisters while her parents were out, doing any casual jobs they could find, she was not sent to school at all and could neither read nor write. The farmer's wife at Bartrès, described by the village schoolmaster as a "cold and rather parsimonious woman," was herself barely literate, so we may fairly guess that her catechetical methods lacked something of enlightenment. It is little wonder that Bernadette could not memorise the abstract words dinned into her poor head, without explanation, at the end of a tiring day. It made the weary little drudge very unhappy because, until she knew the catechism, she would not be able to make her first Communion. This child of predilection really pined for Holy Communion, and to the frustration of being kept from it was added another sorrow in the persistent unkindness shown to her by some member of the rural household. She bore it all, the distress of her asthma, the hard work, the deprivation of school and the ill-treatment, with a "gay and laughing" front, because, as she told a friend, she thought it to be God's will for her. But she grieved in secret and ate out her affectionate heart, longing for God in His Sacrament. One day, seeing a woman from Lourdes pass by, she called to her and said: "Would you tell my parents that I am weary of this place and want to return to join the class of those preparing for first Communion. Tell them to come for me." Things must have reached a sad pass in the Pyrenean Arcady to make Bernadette yearn for the dreadful *cachot* in the Petits-Fossés. At any rate she would have affection there,

¹ Cros, *Histoire de Notre-Dame de Lourdes d'après les Documents et les Temoins*. Vol. I, 3rd ed., Paris, 1925, p. 58. Bernadette's reference to her love for the smallest lambs mentioned above was made in reply to a question from Père Cros.

even if never enough to eat, and, being herself a most loving and lovable little person, she needed affection as a flower, however humble, needs water and light. But François and Louise Soubireux were in no hurry to bring their first-born back to the misery in which they themselves lived, for they had not the slightest suspicion of the distress which she felt. When a second urgent message to her parents brought no result, Bernadette packed her few things in a bundle, gave her employers notice, and on Thursday, 28 January, 1858, took the road to Lourdes. She never again visited Bartrès, a fact surely significant in the conduct of a person always so grateful for kindness and so naturally friendly. It might almost serve to banish from the books in future the charming but fanciful eclogue of Bernadette the happy shepherdess, to which even Mgr Trochu, that excellent biographer, shows himself somewhat addicted.¹

Exactly a fortnight after Bernadette's return to Lourdes, on 11 February, 1858, the tremendous thing happened, Heaven's most signal visitation of earth since the Incarnation. As she knelt in ecstasy that bitter winter day before her strangely youthful Vision, "no taller than myself," her friend Jeanne Abadie who saw her from some distance on her knees remarked impatiently to her sister Toinette: *Ellè ne sait que prier Dieu*—all she's good at is praying!² It was a revealing exclamation at the very outstart of Bernadette's mission and "martyrdom" of fame. Her prayer, always of the simplest, consisted at first in the devout use of her cheap little rosary, and then, as she grew in grace, in loving adoration of the will of God which had chosen her for suffering, a vicarious victim for the sins of the world, especially those of bad Catholics, the only people capable of making her really afraid. That she saw, not as an interior, intellectual vision such as St. Teresa experienced of Jesus, but with her eyes of flesh the holy Mother of God, on eighteen distinct occasions, is as certain as any event in history, though it rests entirely in the long run on her uncorroborated witness, as nobody else beheld the Apparitions. But what majesty and power there was in the witness of this young, ailing, illiterate, defenceless girl from the slums! Nearly all those who saw her in ecstasy at Massabielle, including such a lifelong free-thinker as Dr. Dozous, believed in the reality of her visions without further proof. Heaven shone on her transfigured

¹ St. Bernadette, English trans., p. 30.

² Cros, *Histoire*, I, p. 73.

face and convinced them, even while officialdom remained obdurately opposed.

How familiar the names of those excellent functionaries, immortalised by their encounters with Bernadette, have become to us, Jacomet, the Commissioner of Police, Dutour, the Procureur Impérial, Rives, the Examining Magistrate, D'Angla, Captain of the Lourdes gendarmerie, Peyramale, the Parish Priest. All of them came round to belief eventually, in the long or short run. It took Captain D'Angla twenty years to shed his doubts about the Apparitions. When questioned by Père Cros why he held out so long, he made an interesting answer, which might have been given by Jacomet and Dutour also: "I used to ask myself, Is it possible that the Blessed Virgin can have revealed herself to such a little *drôlesse*? I use the word in the sense of vagabond, good for nothing, the daughter of a disreputable family."¹ D'Angla was not himself acquainted with Bernadette, but he found her father's name in the police records as having spent a week in gaol for appropriating an unclaimed joist of timber. That and the fact that François was a palpable failure in business sufficed to blind the good Captain to all other aspects of the situation and to condemn poor Bernadette unseen and unheard. Jacomet and Dutour allowed themselves to be guided by the same prejudices. Nothing good could come out of the Rue des Petits-Fossés. But to the ill-repute of the parents, so largely unjustified, was added the grave fact that Bernadette was associated with a certain Mme Millet, indeed had stayed for a few days in her house, and this woman, a mere servant, had committed the unpardonable crime in small town society of marrying her employer and becoming modestly rich. If she showed off a bit, that surely did not necessarily prove her disreputable.

M. Dutour, an admirable Catholic and very fair-minded official, reported to his immediate chief, the Procureur Général at Pau, on 1 March, 1858, that in his opinion, after examination of the child,

Bernadette Soubirous has never seemed, and does not now seem, to look for any temporal advantage likely to result from the supernatural favour of which she considers herself to be the object. Her family are less exempt from suspicion. . . . A certain Madame

¹ Cros, *Histoire*, I, p. 214.

Millet, once a domestic servant, but now the possessor of a snug little fortune derived from marriage with her former master, . . . being ignorant and idle, is the easy prey of any form of excitement which gratifies her caprice. This woman, having heard people speak of the grotto of Massabielle, . . . set her heart on visiting it in company with Bernadette. For three days she carried the poor child off and lodged her in her own house, during which time they went each morning to the grotto where they lit candles and said the rosary . . .

Though darkly suspicious of the *nouveau-riche* widow and her presence at the Grotto, the Procureur was honest enough to admit that the Blessed Virgin, if it *was* the Blessed Virgin and not Bernadette's imagination, seemed to have nothing against her. Indeed, it was while she was there that the Vision first spoke to the child and requested her with such delicate courtesy to return every day for a fortnight.

But Dutour felt in his bones that Bernadette's parents, though not Bernadette herself who impressed him against his will, must be getting something out of the opulent Mme Millet. "Is it possible," he asked his chief at Pau, "that She who is the purest of creatures can have chosen such abject emissaries through whom to communicate her wishes?" It was perfectly possible, and it is now absolutely certain that François and Louise had taken on something of their daughter's almost miraculous integrity, and steadfastly refused the many offers made by kind people to relieve their dreadful circumstances. André Sajou, their host at the *cachot*, underwent the same influence, and said that he might have become a rich man if he had accepted all the money gifts pressed upon him by visitors to Bernadette at his address. He laid no claims to special nobility, but he never accepted a sou. Well known is the story of how the gentle Bernadette boxed her small brother's ears and made him immediately return the two francs, a fortune in that household, which some ladies had given him for acting as their guide to the Grotto. Such disinterestedness was out of this world altogether and marked Bernadette while still only a child as on the high road to canonisation. It was one of the things that astounded the Curé, M. Peyramale, and helped to break down his initial hostility to Bernadette and her message for, as he told his Bishop, he could only regard it as a miracle of divine grace.

But there was much more in the story than that sublime

detachment. As a witness for Heaven, Bernadette holds a place apart among all those, saints included, who, through the Christian centuries, have received private revelations from God. Our Lady, if not M. Jacomet, M. Dutour, Captain D'Angla, Mother Vauzou and the rest of the good honest folk, knew exactly what she was about when she chose Bernadette as her herald, for grace builds on nature and there was in this lowly child a strange native aristocracy of disposition which made a lie, an exaggeration, an embroidery of a message, abhorrent. Standing, a poor little waif with none to plead for her, before the hostile authorities of state and church, she became a very rock on which broke unavailingly every effort of theirs to frighten, cajole or trick her into denying her Vision or confusing her message. A good authority on these matters has written as follows:

Heroism is most nobly exhibited in constancy, and the constancy of this poor little half-starved, ailing, defenceless child, standing up to the alternate threats and cajolery, the menaces and flattery, of civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and to the stupid if well-meaning efforts of pious sensationalists to get her to elaborate her simple narrative of what she had seen into something more consonant with their conception of what she *ought* to have seen, profoundly stirs one's imagination. She would not concede a point to such insinuations, nor on the other hand would she go back on any of her original statements, and she clearly preferred to say nothing at all about her experiences and in fact never did so except under question. . . . One is bewildered by the spectacle on the one hand of the commotion occasioned by the recent events, and on the other by the perfect balance and calmness of her who was the centre of it all.¹

In the constancy and purity of her witness, Bernadette resembled in her humble fashion Him who said: "My teaching is not my own but His who sent Me." She would sooner have died than change one jot or tittle of the commands given to her in the Lourdes patois by her Heavenly Visitant. Jacomet in his impressive regalia thought it his duty to bully her unmercifully and, when he threatened her with prison, she had no reason to think that he was bluffing. Her answer is famous: "So much the better. I shall be less expense to my father, and while I am in prison you will come and teach me the catechism." Similarly,

¹ Stuart, *Diversities in Holiness*, pp. 174-5.

she outfaced the thundering Abbé Peyramale who had made her tremble, and returned to the lion's den with a racing heart to give him the second part of her Lady's command, which his fulminations had driven out of her head on the first occasion. It made no difference whether she understood the Lady's commands or not, as when she was bidden to wash and drink at a tiny puddle and to eat a bitter herb, actions which made the crowd gathered there shake their heads and consider her demented. She bore the sneers and jeers with the same gentle serenity that she did the tiresome veneration.

The veneration indeed turned into a form of martyrdom which the profoundly humble, self-effacing child had to endure almost daily for eight years on end. As Fr. Thurston wrote in an article which he called *The "Martyrdom" of Bernadette*:

The visitors to Lourdes considered that, being a poor peasant girl, she might be sought out and interrogated with impunity. Her simplicity, gentleness and evident lack of education made her the prey of every self-opinionated bore, of every chattering, curious or impertinent busybody who considered that he paid her and her visions a compliment by condescending to inquire about them.¹

The article is well worth study as showing to what lengths crass, insensitive, misguided people were prepared to go in order to establish a connection with the celebrated Bernadette. One man brought her from her bed with a racking cough, right across Lourdes to his hotel, on a January day of howling, icy winds and torrential rain, that he might interrogate her for two solid hours. This we know because he wrote and published an account of his exploit, saying how much he was edified by Bernadette's firm refusal to accept three louis d'or which he pressed upon her as reward for her trouble in coming out in such vile weather. He tried to inveigle her, as did many others, into telling him what were the three secrets committed to her by the Blessed Virgin, but there he came up against a rock as solid as Massabielle. The secrets went intact with their little guardian to the grave. Another shocking example of crude publicity-mongering is given in the article cited, and such things went on without intermission for eight weary years. This is another example of Bernadette's heroism, for she hardly ever refused a visitor, or many visitors

¹ THE MONTH, July 1924, p. 28.

at the same time, even when she was ill in bed. The many, sceptics or ecclesiastics who endeavoured, like Jacomet, to catch her out in her words or to make her contradict herself were dumbfounded by her quiet tenacity. And how she hated those interminable interviews! Big tears would gather in her eyes when she was summoned to the parlour of the nuns' Hospice in Lourdes, perhaps for the tenth time in one day, to repeat her story to some inquiring bishop or priest or journalist or *grande dame*, but she would brush them away and give a smiling greeting to her visitors. Then, when the interview was over, she would clap her hands and laugh out loud in relief, just like a small child let loose from school.

Bernadette remained to her dying day the most charmingly unstarched and spontaneous of holy souls, one who loved to mimic the portentous mien of her doctor or the thundering of her parish priest, at first her foe and then her doughtiest champion and friend. She wept bitterly when she heard that the grand old man, massive like his native mountains, was dead. When she left Lourdes and the Grotto with all its heavenly associations for ever in 1866, to become a nun at Nevers, three hundred miles and more away, she was in her twenty-third year, but still looked the ageless fourteen she had been at the time of the Apparitions. She seemed to have acquired something of the timelessness of the Immaculate Conception, as a priest who spoke with her and gave her Holy Communion in 1865 testified. "I do not believe," he wrote, "that it would be possible to find a child of thirteen with a younger face than Bernadette's at twenty-one, and her youthfulness has a supernatural charm impossible to miss."¹ And she was still as young of heart, as unspoilt and unspoilable, as on the gloomy, glorious February morning when she went off with Toinette and Jeanne to collect sticks and bones along the banks of the Gave. A rather pompous abbé who visited Bernadette at Lourdes in 1859 delivered to her a homily on the danger of having her head turned by the tributes of respect paid to her on all sides, even by princes of the Church. When people showed her marks of veneration, he continued, she must clasp her rosary tightly and give the glory to the Mother of God. Humbly and in utter sincerity the child replied, as the homiletic abbé recorded: "Monsieur, I thank you for your good advice

¹ Cros, *Histoire*, III, p. 181.

and I will try to put it in practice from this day forth." Now, if there was one person in Lourdes, in France, in the wide world, who had no need of such advice, that person was Bernadette. It was part of her charm, of her heavenly childlikeness, to be either completely unaware of the veneration shown her, or to treat it as a silly thing, a bore or a joke. Yet good, well-meaning people at Lourdes and Nevers went out of their way to humiliate and snub her publicly, for fear she might become conceited.

Her disconcerting naturalness, concealing such unfathomable depths of suffering and union with God, greatly disturbed a number of people with preconceived notions of what sanctity involved. The Mother Superior of the Hospice in Lourdes and the formidable Mother Vauzou, Mistress of Novices at Nevers, were two who could never fit the homely, merry *paysanne* into their stuffy Second Empire notions of the conduct to be expected from a girl singularly favoured by God. Poor, able, complicated Mother Vauzou could never have even begun to understand or appreciate the beauty of the wild flower which had timidly shown its humble head in her well-regulated garden. Whether or not one of Bernadette's three secrets was, as Fr. Thurston ventured to surmise, a pact with the Blessed Virgin never under any circumstances to try to draw to herself the attention of the world, that was exactly how she acted for the rest of her crucified existence. She shunned notice as others might shun the plague, but she was a loving soul, and a little affection from those in charge of her would have done her no spiritual harm. She suffered greatly from the lack of it, a "martyrdom of the heart," one observant nun called the snubs and the coldness. Before thirty-six she was dead, after years of atrocious physical suffering, borne with superhuman cheerfulness and fortitude.

In our time of stars and personalities and pathological craving for the limelight, it is a benediction to think of Bernadette and her unselfconscious holiness, which involved no miracle nor prophecy nor memorable word. On her and on her alone Lourdes and its world-wide consequences depended, like some mighty inverted pyramid balanced on a very small stone. She was the mustard seed from which grew the great tree for the sheltering and healing of the nations. People would have swarmed after her to do her bidding, had she given them a lead. But she never dreamt of any such thing, nor of offering a modest opinion

about arrangements at Massabielle. The basilica went up entirely unknown to her, though she was its real foundations. Magnificent processions and international pilgrimages were organised, which she, the *fons et origo* of them all, never witnessed. She was given permission and even encouraged to attend the solemn consecration of the basilica at Lourdes in July 1876. It was the crown of all that she had lived and suffered for, her supreme interest on earth, but she could not be present, as she knew from hard experience, without riveting all men's attention, and that was something her profound conviction of her worthlessness was unable to bear. "Oh, if I could only see without being seen!" she was heard to exclaim, and so she stayed away, the broom of Our Lady that had worn out its every bristle in her sweet service, and now lay contentedly discarded behind the door. Others might fight for the headlines and welcome, but this little nun, trailing her clouds of glory, hungered only to be forgotten, and to serve God as best she knew how in the tiny lost world behind convent walls, peeling potatoes or polishing candlesticks. Many years after her death, Bernadette did work some miracles to please the Congregation of Rites, but she was herself Our Lady's most beautiful miracle.

NUCLEAR DILEMMA

By

T. D. ROBERTS

Archbishop of Sygdea

UNDER the title "Dilemma of Conscience" the *Catholic Herald* has recently published several important letters. One correspondent stressed the complete impasse reached over the question of nuclear deterrents. He pointed out that to very many Catholics any kind of approval given to nuclear deterrents is "gravely sinful," while others hold that, until any clear pronouncement has been made by the Church, the making of such weapons should be regarded as justifiable. To another correspondent in the same paper it is clear beyond all reasonable doubt that the Pope has already condemned nuclear deterrents.

At the other extreme *The Tablet* sees no moral difficulty about using these weapons against an enemy who has first used them against us. And a theologian, commenting on this attitude, has remarked, "Why not use them first?" Further, *The Tablet* finds it "very hard to see how anyone can advocate leaving a monopoly of nuclear weapons to the Russians."

This inability to see clearly the moral principles that are involved, let alone their application, springs, according to Mr. J. B. Priestley, from "nuclear madness," which makes our rulers "lunatic shepherds" and ourselves sheep conditioned by unreality, hysteria and panic. To Lord Russell the preparation for nuclear war is "crime and folly without parallel in human history." In Sir Stephen King-Hall's judgment even defensive strategy condemns it as folly amounting to treason. Has history ever yielded a better example of unaided human reason groping in darkness?

In this confusion Catholics naturally turn to the Church, which is already exercising in so many fields its divine right to supplement by its authority the uncertainty of human reasoning. For example, if a Catholic finds the same difficulty in proving (even to himself) the intrinsic malice of contraception as do successive Lambeth Conferences, or the Parliaments of Indian States in legalising contraceptive methods, he must confess, "My inability to see contraception as intrinsically wrong is due to my defective reasoning. I can only obey the Church when it forbids the practice and try to see it as God sees it." In fact, several petitions have gone to Rome seeking for the same kind of clear-cut teaching on modern war. As far as I know, there has been nothing more decisive than the statement of Cardinal Ottaviani, whose position in the Holy Office may add extrinsic authority to the intrinsic force of his arguments. As long as twelve years ago he said, speaking chiefly of weapons now conventional, that "war (modern total war) must altogether be forbidden."¹

Meanwhile no one can deny the urgency of decisions on nuclear policy. In this situation is it possible for a Catholic in a position of responsibility to persist in his state of doubt and merely wait for a definitive pronouncement from the Church? For my part, I would recommend him to consider what is set out by St.

¹ *Institutiones Juris Publici Eccl.*, vol. I, pp. 151-5, 3rd ed. (Rome 1947).

Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* "for the purpose of obtaining knowledge of the matters about which an election is to be made," viz., a serious decision according to the will of God. It would greatly help if he could be taken to some place of retreat which provided opportunity for prayer, solitude and study. Then I would remind him of St. Ignatius's words:

In order that both the giver and receiver of the Exercises may be better helped and benefited, it must be presupposed that every good Christian must be more ready to excuse the proposition of another man than to condemn it; and if he cannot save it, let him enquire how he understands it: if the other understands it wrongly, let him correct him with love; if this suffice not, let him seek all possible means in order that the other, rightly understanding it, may save it from error.

This is a statement of the highest importance, but never more so than in an assembly where some may think of others as mad or bad or both, and employ words like "crack-pot," "murder," "suicide," "lunacy," "sheep" and so on. Politeness may indeed eschew the evil word, but only charity controls the evil thought.

I would insist on his having a New Testament, and a copy of Fr. Stratmann's *War and Christianity Today*. (I have met a few who did not like it, but hardly anyone who has read it.) Fr. Stratmann covers pretty thoroughly in small compass the teaching on war of Our Lord, of the Popes and many Bishops, of non-Catholics and non-Christians. The teaching of non-Catholics and non-Christians is important; for the Pope has often exhorted the faithful to cultivate with all God's friends our common ground of reason and conscience.

To prepare himself for the "election" his mornings and evenings would be spent in meditation; only the afternoons would be given to lectures and discussions. These would cover as thoroughly as possible the classical teaching of theologians on the requirements of morality in war, including defensive war; especially on the *modus debitus*—the due proportion between the good to be defended and the evils permitted. Here, films might supplement literature lest the academically-minded should give a merely notional and not a real assent to the horrors of total war or to the dangers of multiplying H-bombs.

"War is always immoral whilst a peaceful substitute remains." This is a principle to which all would give their consent. On the

matter of "peaceful substitutes," Catholic literature is worse than scanty. But we have in the weekly *Peace News* and similar publications accounts of non-violent resistance all over the world. Knowledge of such alternatives is surely a duty for any serious student, especially a Christian.

These alternatives become vitally important when we recall the moralists' insistence that it must be known for certain whether, in point of fact, the weapon on trial (here nuclear weapons) will *effectively* defend or deter. To use the weapon without this certainty would be to act like a man casually heaving bricks out of his window, an action discouraged also by policemen. The state of doubt must be resolved by enquiry into the possible effects of such actions.

Let us note in passing that Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall, in his *Defence in the Nuclear Age* is as much concerned with the strategy of war as any other naval man might be in arguing for a new type of gun. The indirect bearing of his book, on the morality of nuclear warfare, is in its condemnation on military grounds. Even if its morality were unquestioned the very concept would still remain for him strategic lunacy.

In assessing the proportion between the good to be defended and the evil to be permitted, the Catholic moralist will have always before his eyes the essential consideration, "the good of religion." He will consider how, for example, God's interests may have suffered among non-Christians because of wars between Christians. From personal experience I would rate the physical effects of war, even in Hiroshima, as slight in comparison with the moral effects. Again, every penny of the astronomical millions spent on defence belongs to God. It is all "entered in His books," and as His stewards, men must account for their use of God's gifts. It could be that He has allowed such great poverty in Asia and Africa in order to make us the pity-full instruments of His pity. Our hands are the limbs of one Body, His own Son's. The doctrine of the Mystical Body—the analogy with the physical body, though divinely chosen, inevitably falls short of the reality—is the one I would propose as the subject of our meditations and as the background for all our discussions. Among the many references to the doctrine by Our Lord and by His disciples, John and Paul, I would choose as the consideration most helpful to the "election" Our Lord's description of the

Last Judgment (Matt. xxv, 31-46): "I was hungry and you gave me not to eat. . . . As long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me." "All nations" are to be judged, that is, all responsible beings endowed with conscience, the guide to their Creator's will. There is not a single one who was not created to be a member of Christ's kingdom or who is denied the means to secure his place in it.

At the same time, and this is a most important consideration, Our Lord did not say that violence has no place in His kingdom. It is even His teaching that only violence can possess it. Nor can it be said that this refers only to violence against self; for there are soldier saints, like St. Joan of Arc. The Christian violence is surely that of the surgeon operating. The torturer's violence is the devil's.

The scene on Calvary seemed to all its witnesses the triumph of evil in the war of ideas. The final victory went to Our Lord, the Father's Idea. True, even the meekness of God's Lamb, His rejection of fire from heaven and of angelic armies does not determine our choice against all war. But would the following be a fair question to put to our responsible Catholic, pondering his "election" after meditating on the words and acts of our Sovereign Legislator?

Did His violence willed by and against Himself carry any lesson of renunciation for nations as well as for individuals?

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN NOVEL

By

MARGARET M. MAISON

THE EARLY Christian novel was a recognised species of nineteenth-century fiction, and indeed flourished so exceedingly in the Victorian age that critics came to regard it as a sort of literary nuisance. Victorians of widely differing creeds,

ages and talents all enthusiastically tried their hand, with varying measures of success, at "Early Christian romance."

Its rise to fame and fashion is remarkable, for in the first decades of the nineteenth century it was associated with neither religion nor respectability. Too often the Early Christian period served merely as a background for highly-coloured and wildly melodramatic tales of pagan luxury, decadence and brutality. *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) inspired hosts of inferior imitators who used the materials of sensationalism more crudely and less intelligently than Bulwer-Lytton (G. P. R. James's *Attila* (1837) is a typical example), and who frequently exploited the theme of *Christiani ad leones! Virgines ad lenones!* in most gruesome detail. Small wonder that such stories were then strictly shunned by the orthodox, both Catholic and Protestant. "Mark Rutherford" in his novel *Catharine Furze* tells us of an Evangelical rector of the early eighteen-forties who has written an Early Christian tale, but is most anxious to keep its authorship secret since, as he says, "people would not think the better of me, certainly as a clergyman, if they knew it was mine." Novelists who attempted to treat of the period in a more sober and scholarly manner failed to capture the public interest and produced tedious tales like J. G. Lockhart's *Valerius* (1821), a story of persecutions under Trajan, which reads like a very stiff and stilted translation from Latin.

It was in fact the Oxford Movement that rescued the Early Christian novel from these melodramatic whirlpools and pedantic backwaters, and placed it in the main stream of popular religious fiction that flowed so abundantly in England from the middle of the eighteen-forties onwards. True the "thriller" tradition was continued by novelists such as Whyte-Melville and Wilkie Collins, but the Early Christian novel now became more and more the preserve of devout writers who emphasised the spiritual rather than the sensational aspects of martyrdom and were eager to narrate the adventures of the soul as well as the body. The Anglo-Catholics must be given credit for first realising the possibilities of these tales as religious propaganda. Edward Munro's *Claudian* (1842) did much to popularise this type of fiction among "the new High," and before long Catholics, Evangelicals and Broad Churchmen were busy ransacking the *Acta Martyrum* for plots and characters.

The heyday of the Early Christian novel as a tale for the times

came in the eighteen-fifties, when three of the most famous of all religious novels appeared in quick succession—Kingsley's *Hypatia* (1853), Wiseman's *Fabiola* (1854) and Newman's *Callista* (1856). Despite Kingsley's burning convictions of his divinely-inspired vocation as a religious novelist, most modern readers will find the spiritual content of his stories a little shallow and schoolboyish, and today we read *Hypatia* for its splendid picture of Rome ageing hideously—a genuine triumph of the historical imagination—for the vigorous and breezy narrative and for the masterly account of the death of Hypatia herself rather than for details of the somewhat colourless hero's search for truth, or the anti-Catholic message that formed the whole *raison d'être* of the book.

Fabiola was the Catholic answer to Kingsley. Wiseman, carefully avoiding descriptions of pagan excesses, included nothing "which the most sensitive Catholic eye would shrink from contemplating," and the Cardinal's best-seller, praised by the Archbishop of Milan as "the first good book that had the success of a bad one," dissolved the last lingering prejudices of the faithful against Early Christian fiction. Wiseman's comment in this connection is illuminating. To a friend he wrote, "When it was first announced that I had written a 'romance' there was terrible commotion among my cardinalial brethren. Now, however, from the Pope downwards I have nothing but thanks and compliments, and all Rome is placarded with it, my name in large type. I consider this a perfect revolution, a great triumph of the 'spirit of the age' or 'progress' over forms and etiquettes." *Fabiola* is a lively story, with a detailed account of the conversion of the haughty and sophisticated heroine and some impressive descriptions of various well-known martyrdoms, chronological and geographical accuracy, as the author admitted, being sacrificed for this purpose. The character that Wiseman described best was that of St. Agnes, and his very slight but skilful sketch of this innocent and beautiful child, without either priggishness or sentimentality, is one of the few good studies in Victorian religious fiction of outstanding juvenile virtue and purity.

The extensive popularity of *Fabiola* (it had no less than seven translations in Italian alone and was translated into almost every other European language) led its author to hint to Newman that he too might essay an Early Christian story. The result was *Callista*. Newman was clearly at home in the third century, but he lacked

the gift for swift and vivid narration that Wiseman possessed. He was by no means a born novelist—indeed, so laborious did he find this task that he stopped in the middle of writing *Callista* “from sheer inability to devise personages or incidents.” He completed it only with great difficulty and *Callista* never enjoyed a fraction of *Fabiola*’s popularity. Its value lies chiefly in its autobiographical quality, for the principal phases of *Callista*’s spiritual growth and conversion bear no little resemblance to Newman’s own, and in thus revealing the movements of a great mind and the sufferings of a great spirit, the story forms part of our heritage of confessional literature and touches depths of the inner life rarely exhibited in novels of the eighteen-fifties.

The Early Christian novel was by this time firmly established as one of the most attractive forms of religious fiction, and its later developments are varied and interesting. The Evangelicals used it for adventure stories for the young, and the splendid novels of Mrs. Elizabeth Charles, which combine scholarly accuracy, a reverential spirit and a wealth of exciting incident, deserve a better fate than the oblivion to which the twentieth century has condemned them. Dean Farrar, author of the much-ridiculed *Eric, or Little by Little*, produced two “didactic romances,” *Darkness and Dawn* (1891), a story of persecutions under Nero, and *Gathering Clouds* (1895), a tale of the fourth century, both of which, although intended to be adult in appeal, proved popular with children. “My youngest, who is only six, is deeply interested in the story of Philip and Eutyches entwined with the history of the great Chrysostom,” wrote an admiring reader to Farrar in 1895.

Catholics, following Wiseman’s lead, wrote vivid and anachronistic tales that occasionally ran riot in an orgy of martyrology and went far beyond Wiseman’s delicacy and reticence in describing details of brutality and suffering. These novels in fact show a curious mixture of lofty Catholic idealism and tawdry sensationalism. The anonymous *Flora* (1886) was one of the most successful of these Catholic “gore and glory” novels. A huge historical canvas, scenes of spectacular grandeur and hideous realism, combined with a fervent and exalted preaching of *vincit qui patitur*—such were the characteristics of *Flora*, characteristics also appearing in Sienkiewicz’s *Quo Vadis?* which, translated from the Polish in 1896, enjoyed the distinction of being the most popular foreign novel of the century in England.

Even the aesthetes, surprisingly enough, were attracted by the Early Christian period, and Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) is indeed "an exquisite blossom of aesthetic romanticism." Stylistically Pater brought the Early Christian novel near to perfection, transforming it into a thing of surpassing beauty, a carefully wrought and magnificently polished work of art. But his interests lay in hedonism rather than heroism, his pre-occupation throughout the story with "the elegance of sanctity" is wearisome, and this highly-perfumed, over-elaborate work, rich in *fin-de-siècle* decadence and perverted Anglo-Catholicism, is entirely lacking in the spirit of the Early Church.

One of the most extraordinary and fruitful branches of Early Christian fiction was the "New Testament novel." It was only in the last decades of the nineteenth century that religious novelists, and those chiefly non-Catholic, ventured right back to the life of Christ Himself. "The Christian world would never tolerate a novel with Jesus Christ as its hero," thought the American General Lew Wallace—quite mistakenly as it proved, for the enormous success of his *Ben-Hur* (1880), in England as well as the United States, showed that the time was ripe for the presentation of scenes from the Gospels in fiction. It was on American soil that this type of story flourished most abundantly, and writers such as Florence Kingsley, F. W. Cooley and E. S. Brooks familiarised the reading public with the idea of Christ in a novel. In the eighteen-eighties and nineties imaginary spiritual biographies of Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot were in great demand; the character of Christ appeared in all kinds of bizarre fictional settings and the amazing number of thoroughly trashy and irreverent novels on these subjects caused even unbelievers to protest against such offensive and appalling lapses of taste.

In England efforts were at first more cautious. Dr. Abbott produced a dry and colourless story in *Philochristus* (1878), the tale of an imaginary disciple, with a rather feeble attempt to show Our Lord's influence "seen as by reflection in the life of one that loved Him." J. Jacobs too in *As Others Saw Him* (1893) essayed a similar type of narrative, treating of the influence of Christ on an imaginary Jewish scribe, but the result was as stodgy and uninspiring as Abbott's story. Soon, however, Marie Corelli rushed in where more learned and orthodox novelists feared to tread. "You certainly tell of marvellous things in a marvellous way," said

Oscar Wilde to Marie Corelli, and *Barabbas* (1893), undoubtedly the most popular New Testament novel in our language, gives us a dazzling display of angels, visions, whirlwinds, thunderstorms, stabbings, swoonings and lovers' meetings. The audacity and irreverence of it all strike the modern reader most forcibly, and one gasps to learn that the Anglican Dean of Westminster declared that Miss Corelli's description of the Resurrection could not be bettered, and read out extracts from *Barabbas* in the Abbey pulpit on the Easter Sunday of 1893. Still more does one gasp to learn that Catholic clergy also applauded this novel, but it is important to remember that Marie Corelli's high reputation in contemporary religious circles rested on her stalwart efforts to uphold the cause of Christianity in fiction at a time when it was fashionable to decry it, to write enthusiastically about the supernatural as a Christian, however unorthodox, rather than as a spiritualist or a theosophist, and to accept the findings of science as a confirmation rather than a denial of the Divine order.

For New Testament fiction was soon to pass into the hands of unbelievers, and George Moore's "Syrian story," *The Brook Kerith* (1916) tells in prose almost as exquisite as Pater's of a Jesus who never suffered death by crucifixion but who only swooned on the cross. Moore's literary powers were higher than those of any other New Testament novelist, but his cool intelligent scepticism proves more irritating to most present-day Christians than all Marie Corelli's flamboyant and eccentric zeal.

Evidence that novels featuring Christ as a character can still command an extremely large reading public on both sides of the Atlantic is shown by the overwhelming success of Lloyd Douglas's two novels "in first century mood," *The Robe* (1942) and *The Big Fisherman* (1948). The exceptionally wide appeal of most New Testament novels is probably, as Andrew Lang first pointed out, due to the fact that "they exactly answer in our day, and granting our social conditions, to the old dramas in which Biblical History was acted in Miracle and Mystery Plays, they fill up the space which the imagination leaves vacant, and show the characters in real dresses and properties." Sensitive readers, however, recall the wise words of *The Atlantic Monthly*, commenting on the problem of portraying Christ in a novel: "A sister art like painting may interpret, but literary art knows its limitations. It will be boldest in the forms of poetry and the drama, but fiction turns

away. There is one subject before which great fiction, with all its mirror-like power, drops its eyes, and that is Truth Incarnate."

Indeed, the difficulties and defects of the Early Christian novel loom large throughout its history. At worst it combines all the obvious shortcomings of the bad historical novel with the outrageous spiritual improprieties of the bad religious novel, and does much to support George Eliot's contention that "the weapons of Christian warfare were never sharpened at the forge of romance." At best it brings to life the first centuries of the Church, heroic and vigorous with all "the early uncorrupted instincts of Christianity." Our finest Early Christian novels have not only entertained but converted, inspired, refreshed, and, in the words of the author of *Fabiola*, have kindled "admiration and love . . . of those primitive times, which an over-excited interest in later and more brilliant epochs of the Church is too apt to diminish or obscure."

TRANSLATING MIDDLE ENGLISH SPIRITUAL WRITINGS¹

THE ORIGINS of modern English prose are co-extensive with fourteenth-century orthodox spiritual writing. Professor R. W. Chambers makes this abundantly clear in his *Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his school* by his comparison of Wiclif, so often alleged to be the father of English prose, with Rolle and Hilton. The great literary figures of fourteenth-century England, if we exclude Chaucer and Langland, are Rolle, Hilton, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and Julian of Norwich. And they are all fired with the same purpose, to teach men how to raise their minds and hearts to God, the traditional theory and practice of prayer in its widest sense. Three of them are theologians, in the same sense that St. Bernard and his early followers were theologians, learned men with a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers, intent upon deploying their learning according to the mind of the Church and the law of Charity, to advance souls, their own and others, along the way of Christian Perfection. The fourth, Julian of Norwich, "a woman unlettered, feeble and frail," claims that this spiritual knowledge which

¹ *Walter Hilton: The Ladder of Perfection*, a new translation by Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin Books 3s 6d).

Julian of Norwich: A Shewing of God's Love: The Shorter Version of the Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love, edited by Anna Maria Reynolds (Longmans 9s 6d).

they acquired by study was revealed to her by Our Lord; and that she is inspired to tell it by the same law of Charity:

But I know well this that I say—I have it on the shewing of Him who is Sovereign Teacher—and truly charity urgeth me to tell you of it, for I would that God were known and my fellow-Christians helped (as I would be myself), to the more hating of sin and loving of God. Because I am a woman should I therefore believe that I ought not to tell you about the goodness of God since I saw at the same time that it is His will that it be known.¹

We shall not, then, expect to find in the English spiritual writings of the fourteenth century any “new” doctrine. What is new and exciting is the power they possess for synthesis and clarity. They have found a new medium for expressing the Church’s traditional spirituality. There is an urgency and a freshness in it, a directness and practicality which will appeal to their own countrymen. Nor is there any burking of the difficulties, any dilution of high doctrine or over-simplification. Understanding and practice of their doctrine are alike difficult. Julian of Norwich, who speaks in such glowing terms of the Divine Love and Mercy, makes it quite clear that to have the love of God means the rejection of all “worldly weal.” And the *Ladder of Perfection* calls for sustained and careful reading, even from the experienced student of Medieval Spirituality.

Walter Hilton’s purpose, in the *Ladder of Perfection* (it is addressed to an anchoress, his “ghostly sister in Jesus Christ”), is to lead the Christian soul who has answered the call to the contemplative life, from the state of the beginner, the novice, to the way of the perfect, in which she will be disposed, as perfectly as possible, to receive the extraordinary graces of infused contemplation. Julian of Norwich was herself an anchoress; and though it is not certain whether she had already embraced the contemplative state when she was favoured with her “shewings,” these revelations are, in fact, some of the extraordinary graces of infused contemplation, as Walter Hilton emphasises at the end of Book II of *The Ladder*.

Julian finds it difficult to set down her revelations in writing—a difficulty common to all those who try to give some account of their personal mystical experience, and one which will naturally extend itself to those who read her writings:

The ghostly sight I may not nor cannot shew unto you as openly and as fully as I would, but I trust in Our Lord God All-Mighty that He of His goodness and for your love shall make you take it more ghostly and more sweetly than I can or may tell it you.

Hilton, too, realises that his language may sometimes express his

¹ *A Shewing of God’s Love*, p. 17.

thought inadequately or obscurely. He approaches his subject "with dread," and calls upon the grace of God, for he is writing of "the highest and hardest of crafts," which is the service of God. He is also aware that his readers may misinterpret him. He ends his book thus:

Also these words that I write take them not too strictly, but there that thee thinketh by good avisement that I speak too shortly, either for lacking of English or wanting of reason, I pray thee mend it only where need is. Also these words that I write to thee, they long not all to a man that hath active life, but to thee or to any other which hath the state of life contemplative.¹

These are the difficulties which Julian and Hilton envisage for their readers—difficulties which will, of course, be multiplied once we begin to "translate" them.

"It is always difficult," writes Dom Gerald Sitwell in the Introduction to his own version of Hilton's *Scale*, "when turning Middle English into Modern, to know how far to let the colour of the original shine through." Mr. Sherley-Price has side-stepped this difficulty. His version is based, not on the MSS., but on that rather uneasy compromise between Middle and Modern English, Dr. Evelyn Underhill's edition (from which we have just cited); in fact a translation of a translation. He believes that "to read a book in fourteenth century English will appeal to few readers of the present time," and that "it is necessary to release Hilton's message from the obscurities of Middle English." Sister Anna Maria's version is based on a principle diametrically opposed to this:

While every effort has been made to preserve the idiom and vocabulary of the original, it has nevertheless been considered necessary in some instances, for the sake of clarity and ease in reading, to replace an obsolete word by a modern one, and to transpose or expand a phrase.

In other words, the colour and flavour of the original should be retained whenever possible. And this is especially true of theological and spiritual writing, where precision is often so vital. There can be little doubt which of these two principles is the right one in translating Middle English religious prose. Substantially, the grammar and syntax,

¹ *The Scale of Perfection*, edited by Evelyn Underhill, Watkins, 1923, p. 223. Mr. Sherley-Price, in his Introduction, rightly points out that "the active and contemplative lives are not mutually exclusive," and that "the ordinary man and woman is often capable of advancing much further along the paths of the spiritual life than he or she realises." But, in the context, this is to imply that *The Scale* (or *Ladder*) is written for all, whereas Hilton states explicitly that he is writing for contemplatives. The *mixed* life, to which all Christians should aspire, is another matter; and Hilton deals with this in his *Epistle on the Mixed Life*, of which Mr. Sherley-Price makes no mention.

vocabulary and idiom of the English of Hilton and Julian *is* modern English. And any educated Englishman or woman who is sufficiently interested in his own religious heritage should be capable (I will not say of appreciating, at the outset, the spiritual theology of a Julian or a Walter Hilton—their purpose is to educate us to this appreciation) of understanding these writers, given modern spelling and punctuation, and an occasional glossed word.

As an illustration of this contention we may cite the following passages, taken at random from a manuscript of Book II of the *Scale*, without alteration, except of spelling and punctuation, and compare them with Mr. Sherley-Price's version:

Nevertheless, this night is sometimes painful, and sometimes it is easy and comfortable. It is painful first, when a man is muckle foul, and is not, through grace, used for to be often in this murkness. But for he would fain have it, he sets his thought and his desire to Godward, as muckle as he may.

However, this light [*sic*] is sometimes full of pain, and sometimes pleasant and consoling. When one who is deeply contaminated by sin wishes to enter this darkness it is at first painful to him, for grace has not yet accustomed him to it; so he tries to fix his mind and will on God as best he can.¹

Again:

There was a man that would go to Jerusalem; and for he knew not the way, he came to another man, that he hoped knew the way thither, and asked if he might come to that city. The other man said to him that he might not come thither without great dis-ease and great travail; for the way is long, and there are great perils of thieves and robbers; and many other lettings [hindrances] there are, that shall fall to men in the going.

A man once wished to go to Jerusalem, and since he did not know the way, he called on another man, who, he hoped, knew the way, and asked him for information. The other man told him that he would not reach it without great hardship and effort. "The way is long," he said, "and there is great danger from thieves and bandits, as well as many other difficulties which beset a man on this journey."²

It must not be thought, however, that Mr. Sherley-Price's version is a failure. On the contrary, within his own terms of reference, and considering the difficulties with which he has had to contend, it is a great success. But it would, no doubt, have been better, had he

¹ Book II, C. 24.

² Book II, C. 21.

restricted his version to Book I alone. He fails to point out in his introduction that *The Ladder* ends logically at the end of the first book; and that Book II is in the nature of an Afterthought, written in response to a request for further information on one particular aspect of the spiritual ascent, *viz.*, the way to union seen as the gradual re-formation of the soul according to its pristine likeness—the Divine image in which it was made. Each book of *The Ladder* presents the same substantial doctrine, but in a different guise and with different emphasis; whereas the unsuspecting modern reader will expect that “II” is a natural and logical complement to “I.”

Again, Mr. Sherley-Price has had to contend with the fact that there is, as yet, no critical edition.¹ (The MSS. are legion, and there are at least three different recensions.) And unlike Sister Anna Maria, who has herself edited the unique manuscript of this Shorter Version of Julian's *Revelations*, he is neither a Religious, nor, it would appear, a professional student of Middle English. Thus, for example, when Hilton says to his reader that he “will gladly with dread fall to thy desire” and speak of the soul as the image of God, Mr. Sherley-Price translates “I will gladly accede to your wishes, although I do so with some apprehension”; thus missing almost entirely the spiritual overtones of Hilton's expression—the *awe* which belongs to the *timor Dei*, the emotion properly felt by one who contemplates God, the soul and the mysterious likeness of the one to the Other: an awe which is mingled with the gladness which flows from the awareness of God's presence and our likeness to Him. Again, when Hilton says:

The Contemplative life lieth in perfect love and charity felt inwardly by ghostly virtues, and by soothfast knowing and sight of God and ghostly things (Underhill),

the “modernisation,”

The Contemplative life consists in perfect love and charity inwardly experienced through the spiritual virtues, and in a true knowledge and perception of God and spiritual things,²

is quite serious misrepresentation. The one phrase which needs to be explained to the modern reader, “spiritual virtues” (humility and affective [as opposed to effective] charity) is left unglossed: the modern equivalent of the active and continuous sense of “knowing” is not “knowledge”: “sight” means what it says—some analogous equivalent of bodily sight, intuitive as opposed to discursive or

¹ The Rev. T. P. Dunning, C.M., of University College, Dublin, with the assistance of Miss Clare Kirchberger, is at present preparing the critical edition of Book I for the Early English Text Society.

² Book I, C. 3.

inferential (which is our natural way of knowing God)—and not “perception”; and Hilton does not say that the contemplative life consists in perfect love . . . and in true knowledge but “in perfect love felt by ghostly virtues and by knowing.”

One cannot blame Mr. Sherley-Price for falling into these traps. But one cannot help feeling that he would have avoided a good many of them had he adopted Sister Anna Maria's principle. This principle is the main key to a most successful version of her Middle English text. It is to be regretted that Mr. Sherley-Price did not adopt it.

JAMES WALSH

REVIEWS

NUCLEAR WARFARE

Defence in the Nuclear Age, by Stephen King-Hall (Gollancz 18s).

THE MAIN INTEREST of this book lies in the fact that the policy which it advocates might possibly, under a different government and in the foreseeable future, become the official policy to which we all might find ourselves committed. The author, who is not without experience in the conduct of public affairs and whose sincerity is unquestionable, holds the view that this country should contract out of the nuclear arms race altogether. Now obviously such a policy, were it to be adopted, would not only be a calculated risk of terrifying dimensions but would also involve unforeseeable repercussions elsewhere. To all such objections Sir Stephen has an answer. And while some of the answers are considerably less convincing than he would wish, it is at least to his credit that no single issue has been shirked.

His first postulate, then, is that we cannot afford to go on producing nuclear weapons, (a) because it is suicidal as a policy, and (b) because we are not rich enough to do it. (Although he himself does not unduly emphasise this aspect, it is the idea of the saving in the national budget thus envisaged which will appeal most of all to the man in the street.) Therefore we should announce to the world that we are no longer going to make, use or possess any H-bombs. Nor are we going to possess, or to make use of, any thermo-nuclear weapons whatsoever. And what then would be the effect of this startling proposal? America, the author holds, would of course be shocked by our defection and would be unlikely to follow our example, but would remain on the whole friendly. NATO, equally of course, would cease to exist, But the other non-nuclear powers would welcome our gesture as a stepping off the path to destruction and as a moral lead. With those powers we

would then form a European defence association which, admittedly, could only be in the nature of a frontier guard. And what of Soviet Russia? Well, Sir Stephen says, it is just possible that the Soviet rulers might be impressed by the very magnitude of the decision, more especially since it is in the realm of ideas more than of material things that they aim at domination. Also for a time they might be put off balance, as a boxer who swings at his opponent and misses. But, the obvious objector at this point interposes, what if the Russians . . . ? Very well, replies Sir Stephen firmly, let us look this squarely in the face. Suppose the Russians, tempted by the weakness of the opposition, decide to push forward. We do what we can to stop them, but fail. We are invaded. Even so all is not over. The war becomes one of minds instead of weapons. Thenceforward it is the business of the invaded to convince the invader of the superiority of his own way of life. Moreover all contingencies connected with a defence-system of non-violence against violence, even so as to include a possible occupation by the enemy, should be carefully studied beforehand.

Such then is the thesis. It will not appeal to everybody. The author foresees this and points to what to him is the only alternative, namely, mutual destruction by an exchange of H-bombs. Which as an argument, and if it really is the only alternative, is unanswerable. But even so the risks involved are certainly greater than he allows. For instance, is he right in saying: "I can imagine no circumstances in which an army of occupation *would wish*, to be surrounded by millions of desperate and starving civilians"? I wonder. Was it not Lenin who said that he cared not if three-quarters of the population of the world died so long as the remaining quarter was Communist? There was another tyrant not so long ago who made the same sort of wild remarks in a book in which he stated what he would do if he got the chance; and few paid much attention. We cannot afford to be as negligent again.

On the other hand, Sir Stephen is surely right when he urges that we should step up our efforts to influence public opinion in enemy countries. "There is an extraordinary delusion prevalent in democratic countries that public opinion in totalitarian states is unimportant," he says. "On the contrary, any dictator or oligarchy which knows its business regards the control of public opinion as a task of urgent and continuous priority." "Public opinion," he goes on, "is the Achilles heel of a totalitarian régime, and the Soviet Union is no exception to this rule." All of which is very true, and even more to the point if the satellite states are taken into consideration. By all means then let us intensify our political warfare campaign (though it should not necessarily be confined to the boosting of democracy which, it still must be insisted, is not suitable for universal export), but it is to be hoped that,

in spite of persuasive appeals such as this and the insidious influence of Gallup polls, the people of this country will not be induced wantonly to throw away the only defence which stands between them and a fate a good deal worse than death.

JOHN MCEWEN

RUSKIN'S DIARIES

The Diaries of John Ruskin, 1848-1873. Selected and Edited by Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse (Oxford: Clarendon Press 70s).

THE SECOND VOLUME of the Ruskin Diaries will not disappoint those Ruskinians who enjoyed the first volume. It is full of characteristic prejudices: "Really these roaring high art men are wretched nuisances," and of human touches which reveal the essential Ruskin: "I recollect jumping off my carriage to show Monte Rosa and being vexed because nobody cared about it." Having calculated one day how many days remained to him before he reached what he calls "the perfect term of life," for some months all diary entries were marked not only with the date but with the number of days still, on this reckoning, left of his life.

It is unfashionable today to trace a relationship between good morals and good painting or even to concede that painting may reflect nihilism, amoralism and despair, but there is more truth than our advanced critics might be prepared to admit in Ruskin's entry after visiting the Louvre on 8 September 1849. "There is no Greatness of Manhood and Mind too vast to be expressed by it [painting,] no meanness or vileness too little or too foul to be arrested by it; and what the man is such is his picture—not the achievement of an ill- or well-practised art, but the magnificent or miserable record of a divine or decrepit mind." A typical Ruskinian overstatement, for holy people have painted deplorable pictures and some great paintings have been the work of depraved artists, but Ruskin was fully justified in his belief that a man's view of the universe will be reflected in his art, and this is at least a partial explanation of the infinite superiority of the art of Catholic Europe when contrasted with the nadir of art, which is the by-product of Russian Marxism.

Ruskin described Venice and Chamonix as his two bournes on earth. The late Martin Conway told me that in his old age Ruskin confided to him that he wished he had spent more time in the study of nature and natural beauty and less on art. Be that as it may, the great interest of these Diaries is the fact that his two great passions are faithfully reflected in its pages. There is a great deal about Venetian Art and Architecture, but to me at least the most attractive passages in

these Diaries are those in which Ruskin describes scenery. The word painter's palette is limited and the art of evoking a picture by words consists partly in accurate observation and partly the technique of choosing the right words to differentiate two closely related effects, (as, for instance, a dawn on high mountains as seen from the plains,

How faintly flushed and phantom fair
Was Monte Rosa hanging there

and dawn as seen from a mountain valley) and partly in the apt use of metaphor and simile. Ruskin observed nature with the eye of a scientist, and fidelity to what he saw was the motive of all his descriptive writing not, as silly people suggested, fine writing. You are conscious of a real intellectual effort as the basis of his best descriptive writing. "I put my *mind* into the scene instead of suffering the body only to make a report of it." Here is a passage from his Diaries (29 August 1849) which illustrates the infinite pains which he took to record the details of a view:

I think I never saw Mont Blanc so beautiful. White cirri were stretched behind it; its own white not so bright, except where the ice glittered; its shadows dark against the cloud, but the whole breadth of light so vast and the mountain so silvery and mysterious—though its lines as clear as crystal—that it far exceeded the effect of it against the open blue. On the other side, too, there was a heavenly scene towards evening: the sky in the North-East of an intense pale blue, in horizontal openings between multitudinous soft cirri, not greenish blue, but perfectly pure, perfectly pale, and yet as full of colour as a gentian leaf.

Ruskin was not only a brilliant word painter, he was also the most accomplished mountain artist. He did not, as so many artists have done, use mountains as a mere means to express his own personality. He was primarily interested in interpreting not himself but the mountains with the result that he combined exceptional fidelity to fact with poetic vision. Many mountain sketches reproduced in these Diaries, such as the sketch of the Chamonix aiguilles ("Cascade de la Folie," page 550) illustrate this felicitous marriage of vision and realism.

It is unnecessary to pay a tribute to the scholarship with which these Diaries have been edited by the distinguished Ruskinians to whom this duty has been entrusted. The book in every respect can only add to the great reputation both of the Editors and of the Oxford University Press.

ARNOLD LUNN

AN UNPROFITABLE REPRINT

The Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda: by Frederick Rolfe. Introduction by Cecil Woolf. (Nicholas Vane 63s).

IT IS HARD to see why these twelve short stories should have been reprinted: all but three are negligible, and these three contain savage caricatures of persons many of whom I knew; indeed, I have had in my possession the complete list—in Rolfe's own handwriting—of the real names of the persons portrayed in *Hadrian VII*: thus it is easy to judge of the venom in which anything "autobiographical" that he wrote was soaked. Perhaps I have never known of anyone with such a power of hating. An artist's work ought to be judged, they say, quite separately from any knowledge of his character, but this is impossible in the case of Rolfe: I doubt if he had genius (though he was sure he had), but his undoubted talent and sensitiveness were throughout defeated by his disastrous perversities. It is possible that he violently suppressed the worst of these till his last years when he abandoned all attempts to delude himself. I suppose that his correspondence during those years is not published even now; and I think that Mr. A. J. Symons (author of *The Quest for Corvo*) with whom I discussed it, agreed that it could never be. I do not doubt the reality of his faith or even of a thread of mystical aspiration, still to be detected in *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*. But the stories, we repeat, are negligible, save those which display evidence of an increasingly self-devastated life.

C. C. MARTINDALE

GREEK POLITICAL THOUGHT

The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics, by E. A. Havelock (Cape 35s).

THIS ambiguously titled book by the Chairman of the Harvard Classical Department is an exposé of a coherent synthesis of political theory achieved by the Athenian sophists. His aim is to resurrect the Greek "liberals" as "an act of historical justice," since in the absence of extant manifestos of democratic ideals we all too commonly assume that the authoritarians—Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, the "Old Oligarch"—reflect the dominant political beliefs of their day. In an exuberant, almost evangelical tone Havelock demonstrates how the birth of Greek science swept away Hesiod's naïve conceptions of a Golden Age at the dawn of civilisation, and how in its stead was constructed a new rationale of the historical and evolutionary development of mankind. On this anthropological basis Democritus and the elder sophists developed their democratic theories and their canons of political behaviour. After examining the very thin fragmentary

evidence, Havelock uses the Platonic dialogues to detail his claim that Plato distorted the sophistic standpoint; and he concludes with chapters on Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* to show how many "liberal" doctrines were emasculated to harmonise with the theory which owed so much to Plato.

Difficulties of interpretation in this field are legion. The fragmentary evidence often reaches us at second or third hand in contexts which may mislead. Plato's dialogues, as Havelock insists, do not necessarily incorporate an accurate version of sophistic belief, which will certainly appear in a deceptive light through being translated into a Platonic context. Yet this book contains some stimulating reconstruction, the chapter devoted to Democritus being particularly suggestive. It is surprising that nothing is made of the influence of Hippocratic medicine on fifth-century political thought; and again, Thucydides's speeches, with their "laws" of human behaviour (especially to *sumpheron* and to *eikos*) are closely relevant but go unmentioned here.

On the other hand, far too much is made of the fragments, and one tires of phrases like "This is guess-work," "It is possible," "Admittedly this is speculative." (Ironically enough, an earlier book on Catullus by this author castigates other scholars for precisely this fault of overstepping the evidence.) The dangers of looking at ancient philosophy through twentieth-century spectacles were never more clearly exposed. The cosmological views of the Ionian scientists (as Guthrie shows in his recent book, *In The Beginning*) have much more in common with the mythological world from which they sprang than is suggested here. And the anachronistic claims made for later theories border upon the absurd. For example, a scrutiny of fragments attributed to Antiphon (the authorship has been a topic of much controversy) leads Havelock to suggest that this philosopher was "a Bentham before his time," that he expresses his views "in Hobbeseian deductive logic," that "his analogue temperamentally seems to be Rousseau," that on the death-penalty he was an abolitionist, a Schweitzer in his reverence for life. The chapter fittingly ends: "Is it possible that in his Greek we catch across the centuries the accents of Sigmund Freud?"

This book will distress many with its fundamental assumption that Plato has reported the sophists with deceit and dishonesty. "No philosopher in his senses," writes Havelock, "will take the trouble to report with fidelity views which intellectually he cannot accept." This seems a regrettable assumption on which to conduct a philosophical enquiry; it might even be thought to be a boomerang.

P. G. WALSH

MR. WEST'S CRITICISM

Principles and Persuasions, by Anthony West (Eyre and Spottiswoode 21s).

TO TURN from the warm spell of Dickens's *Bleak House* to Mr. West's strictures on that novel is like emerging from a fire-lit fuggy room into the biting cold of winter air—salutary, but a little daunting. Reading on, one discovers—in these twenty-eight cutting critiques reprinted from the *New Yorker*—that this is the author's patented approach (like the sergeant's cry of "Wakey! Wakey!"). For pungency and pugnacity these essays would take a lot of beating. George Eliot, George Orwell, François Mauriac, Emile Zola, and Ivy Compton-Burnett receive some very rough treatment; and, regarding Mr. West's performance in the light of aggressive technique, one cannot but admire and applaud the execution. There is something of Johnson, something of Hazlitt, something (yes) of Orwell himself about his style. Mr. West is a master of the knock-down phrase. He appears as a critic of strong first impressions but lacking perhaps in reflective after-thought. He possesses no check, no mental inducement, to pull his punches; and pull them he does not. One by one, accepted reputations of a writer's personality or a work of art go down like so many ninepins before we realise quite what has happened.

"But surely," exclaims the genteel reader, "*Middlemarch* is a great and moral novel." "Oh, do you think so?" retorts Mr. West. "Perhaps you don't know George Eliot's life-story. Here are the facts, you see. She was nothing but a sensual hypocrite." Mr. West on Dickens is just as tough; but here he may possibly have the reader with him. "Look at the way he serialised *Bleak House*," declares Mr. West with enormous disapproval. "Read the instalments and you will see how he changed the characters to meet the circulation. Artistic conscience, the public pulse, with Dickens were just phrases for his monthly returns."

Of course, there is much, very much, in all this; but when we find the "beat-up" applied, in page after page, to the most varied talents, we wonder if the books are quite as bad as Mr. West would have us believe. Ladies and gentlemen—they all get their trouncing. The key to Orwell is sickening self-pity; to Miss Compton-Burnett, selfishness unalloyed. Some figures he hardly allows into the ring, dismissing them as they climb through the ropes. Thus Mr. West takes one or two punches at Henry James, then sends him back (disqualified) to the dressing-room. Is there anyone to last out a fight without ending up bleeding on the boards?

Apparently, there are three figures for whom Mr. West is prepared to forgo his indulgent delight in devastation. Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and—more surprisingly—Sir Winston Churchill all benefit by

this pugilistic lapse. On Sir Winston, Mr. West is genial, appreciative and ironic; on Shaw, for the most part, serious; and on Wells, thoughtful and respectful. In this last study—the longest and fullest in the book—he is at pains to disprove Wells's imputed optimism. He correlates the differing statements made by Wells on progress and the future throughout his extensive years of writing, and shows, convincingly, that Wells was no believer in a simple predestined utopianism. In this essay, Mr. West's critical motors are ticking over more steadily and surely than in most of his other papers. The excitement is lower, but the judgment trustworthy. Mr. West is something more than a tip-and-run reviewer.

DEREK STANFORD

ORDERED CHARITY

Person to Person: A Recipe for Living, by William Lawson, S.J. (Longmans 10s 6d).

WHEN Origen, the doyen of the army of commentators on the Canticle of Canticles, comes to explain the words of the Bride, "He has set charity in order in me," he points out that "if, as the Apostle says, *we are members one of another*, we ought to have towards our neighbours the sort of attitude that makes us love them, not as alien bodies, but as our own limbs."

For the Fathers, the Canticle of Canticles is "a drama with a mystical meaning," in which is unfolded the relationship between Christ and His Body, the Church, and between the individual members of the Body: not merely between Christ and the Church *in act*—which consists of those who are "of the household of the faith," but also the *Ecclesia ex gentibus*, the "expanding" Church—which consists of those who will come to believe: the mystical body in potency, to use the phrase of St. Thomas Aquinas. Between every human being, then, there is this profound relationship, either actually or potentially, of common membership in Christ.

This "mystical" doctrine concerning the nature of the Church forms the basis of Fr. Lawson's book. Every human being is a person, "the creature of God, redeemed by Our Lord's sacrifice, the object of his love, capable still with God's help of entering into the family of the Blessed Trinity. You owe him reverence and love."

He has succeeded in reducing the high doctrine of Origen, Gregory, Bernard and the rest to practical terms; intelligible not only to the non-specialist in mystical or dogmatic theology, but to the non-Catholic, and even the non-Christian (though we feel that the apologetic value of his book is dimmed somewhat by his leaning too heavily on scholastic terminology).

"Ordered" charity is hinted at by St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians (6. 10): it begins at home, in that we are primarily responsible for those who are "of the household of the faith," but it is to be extended to all men, since it is God's will that all come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2). Fr. Lawson is at his best in helping his readers to resolve the apparent contradictions between the particular and the universal. In the "order of charity" Origen pays particular attention to the relationship between the "*pastor animarum*" and his sheep. Fr. Lawson extends his examination to the relations between employer and employed, state (or rather state-official) and citizen; but especially between the educator, in every sphere, and his charge.

Person to Person appears to have grown out of delivered lectures: it has the inevitable weakness of the genre. Repetition in spoken conferences is essential; but in a book it sometimes has the appearance of "padding," and tends to detract a little from the value of the author's otherwise excellent "recipe for living."

JAMES WALSH

THE CATECHISM

A Catholic Catechism (Herder and Herder. Distributors: Burns and Oates 30s).

Ask and Learn, by R. E. Kekeisen (Newman Press \$3.50).

THE NEW German Catechism was published in 1955 after seventeen years of collaboration between pastoral and speculative theologians, diocesan inspectors and school teachers. Their work had aroused much curiosity because it was known that the Germans were favouring a break from the traditional lines of presentation. Already Spanish, Dutch, Italian translations have appeared, and now we have the English edition, produced more attractively than the original German. It will be welcomed by all catechists, clerical and lay; not a few will be led to revise their own methods of teaching.

This catechism merits close study. The new approach is a great improvement upon that with which we are familiar. Since Auger's Catechism of 1563 compilers have envisaged the truths of faith from the point of view of man; they ask and answer the questions: what must we believe, what must we do, what must we use, to get to heaven? The teaching is correct, but such a presentation obscures the wonderful plan of God who is ever taking the initiative to invite men to union with himself and enabling them to live now in union with him. In this German catechism Christian doctrine is God-centred; the compilers ask and answer the questions: what does God tell us about his designs for men? What does God expect of us? At the same time the catechism is Christ-centred, for it is in Christ that God reveals himself and carries

out his loving designs. This new presentation involves several changes in method. Instead of being a series of logically arranged questions and answers with a few scattered footnotes, this catechism is a textbook in which the whole of Christian doctrine is presented as a unity, comprising not only the dogmatic teaching of the Church, but also scripture and liturgy. With only few exceptions each lesson begins with a biblical narration, then the point of doctrine is briefly expounded, and finally the main idea is summarised in one or two answers (total number 248). Some accessory material at the end of a lesson opens various possibilities for the teacher to deepen and apply the doctrine.

In its general structure the catechism breaks a three-century-old tradition; it follows the history of our salvation in Christ, with the Apostles' Creed serving as framework. It thereby remedies some weaknesses of the English Catechism and the American Baltimore divided as they are into Creed—Commandments—Sacraments, and in which the sacraments are made to appear as helps to keep the Commandments rather than as the actions of Christ himself applying to us his work of redemption. In the German catechism grace is linked with the lessons on the Holy Ghost, whilst the sacraments come before the commandments (as in the Roman Catechism) and are rightly placed with the lessons on the Church. The Commandments are thus seen to be the way in which we respond to God's love and live the Christ-life. Finally, the Last Things, treated in a Christ-centred manner, round off the Creed and complete the Christian Message.

Fr. Kekeisen's book is another Question Box, not so dense as Conway's nor so popular in style as Rumble's; it is somewhat on the level of Arendzen's Platform Replies, although the author does not seem to have read the more recent works on scripture and dogma.

F. SOMERVILLE

SHORTER NOTICES

Encyclopédie du Catholique au XX^{ème} Siècle: (Librairie Arthème Fayard).

THIS encyclopaedia is to consist of 150 volumes, each of about 120 pages and each at 300 francs. Several have already been reviewed in THE MONTH. The whole is directed by M. Daniel-Rops, member of the Academy. Clearly we can devote but a word or two to each of the further volumes that have been sent to us. M. N. Corte studies the Origin of Man, according to myth, philosophies old and modern; modern scientific discoveries, Revelation and Catholic theology. Crucial questions will be the infusion and nature of a spiritual soul, the descent of our race from a single pair; directed evolution; the topic of further evolution is just touched upon. *Pensée Moderne et*

Philosophie Chrétienne, by Professor R. Vancourt, seeks to summarise contemporary thought and what led up to it, and what room our traditional philosophy has for it, for "physical" sciences hang in a vacuum without a metaphysic. Fr. M-D. Chenu, O.P., asks is Theology a science, and his answer, though necessarily difficult, is made with simplicity and friendliness. *Les religions de l'Orient ancien* (Egypt, the Nearer East, and Iran) are entrusted to M. E. Drioton, Dr. G. Contenau, and Professor J. Duchesne-Guillemin; Hebrew is reserved for a separate volume. *Hindouisme ou Sanâtana Dharma* by Solange Lemaître impresses us with the innate spirituality of the Indian peoples, the dense efflorescence of their symbolism (the instinct for which has almost died in the West) and the all-but impossibility of finding a vocabulary (if not mental categories) into which to translate it. In *Les Langues Sacrées*, Fr. P. Auvray, Professor P. Poulain and M. A. Blaise study Hebrew, Greek and Latin in view of the form in which the Christian tradition has reached us, a matter of the highest practical importance for the apostolate. We recall how an Indian writer recently said that the modern generation know only that Latin and Greek were languages that "had existed." How to translate Christian thought and formulas so as to make them intelligible to the East (itself changing so rapidly) seems an almost superhuman problem. In *Qu'est-ce qu'un Saint?*, J. Douillet examines the meaning of Sanctity, and then, the history of the cult of saints—a cult so deplorably shrunken amongst ourselves, who know so little of the Church's history: what indeed is our reason for giving such or such a name to a child? Have we really the right to expect St. Charles, St. Henry, St. Jane, St. Elizabeth seriously to take care of the children whom we label by their names? *Prêtres du Christ*, by Fr. J. Lécuyer, C.S. Sp., examines the doctrine of the Sacrament of Order, but always historically, which leads him into pleasant by-ways (the tonsure—what time has been wasted, how charity has been sacrificed, by the quarrels of ecclesiastics about how to cut their hair!), or, more seriously, clerical celibacy, or the priesthood of the laity. *Anglicanism*, by A. D. Tolédano, has no great difficulty about history, but no wonder he is lost among the technical anomalies of an Established Church in a neutral State, a church where there is no unity of doctrine actual or possible, nor effective discipline. He observes how even cathedrals are taking on a ritual of a more Latin kind, and it is ironic to realise what an exorbitant impression was made in France by the televised Coronation service, magnificent but unique. How hard for the logical French mind to apprehend the theist mood of our country, the evaporation of specifically Christian doctrine or the reaction which we feel sure is defining itself against the crumbling of all foundations for morals. As for the old *pietas anglicana*, we fear

it has not held good against the general vulgarisation of manners, of reverence and the sense of awe. In *La plume au service de Dieu*, Fr. A. de Parvillez, S.J., first lays down the principles that should govern Christian authors, and then provides a striking portrayal of the renewal of Catholic literature in France, Professor P. H. Simon has an extremely interesting volume on the Literature of Sin and Grace (1880-1950), that is, in France. He allows us to see (without mentioning him) why Graham Greene is so much better understood in France than here. Finally, Jeanne Hamelin in *Le Théâtre Chrétien*, outlines the history of Christian acting, but is she sure of her examples? She says that in England plays by Wordsworth (?), Coleridge, Walter Scott, Byron, Charles Lamb are acted. Shelley's *Prometheus* has, for England, the value of Goethe's *Faust* for Germany. And she mentions *Lady Windermere's* [sic] as a play by Wilde, with no notice of her Fan. She writes of W. Burther Yeats, and all this part needs drastic revision. But the whole enterprise reveals an immense activity of Catholic writers in France, and not least of lay men and women. Would that we had a comparable Catholic literature dealing with matters even not directly Catholic.

Brave Men: A Study of D. H. Lawrence and Simone Weil, by Richard Rees (Gollancz 18s).

SIR RICHARD, believing that Lawrence and Simone Weil are (for him) "the two most important writers of this age," feels he must probe for points of contact between them. Both at any rate were brave, and Lawrence held that brave men were the only thing worth having. Lawrence certainly was brave, since indignation and disgust for the cruel state of human society did not kill his intense sympathy with all that lives (even snakes, from which he recoiled). Sir Richard says that his work, as a whole, might be a "sermon on a text from G. M. Hopkins—'nature is never spent; there lives the dearest freshness deep down things . . .'" but never quotes what follows: "Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings" from which the last light seemed to have gone. For Lawrence, the dark urge of blood mattered more than any of the maps of intellect. But no Utopia can subsist without an ethic, nor ethic without a metaphysic (indeed a theology). After 1915 he proclaimed: "Every man shall have his wage, whether he work or not, so long as he works when he is fit." But who judges that a man ought to work? or what is each man's fitness? Simone Weil's appetite for information was voracious; her wish to *know* was feverish, almost maniac. Her mind was crammed with far more than she could assimilate so fast; her advisers, clerical or lay, did not see that, but forced her forward—intellectual hypertrophy is not rare in France. She cluttered herself up

with inferior stuff and unsifted evidence before she could assimilate Plato himself in his purity. She joined with Lawrence in pity, but hers quite swamped her judgment. She imagined that a year at the Renault works would show her the workers' life from within: but of course at no moment of the day was her experience the same as theirs. Her headlong idealist generosity sent her to join in the Spanish war; but she would not have understood a *Spaniard*. She deplored modern rootlessness, but a plant needs air as well as earth, and unwittingly she sought a vacuum—the destruction of "personality." Destruction of self-worship, for the love of God, leaves no vacuum, nor is it obtained by one's own efforts only; and unhappily she was obsessed by the apparent "absence of the love of God" in the world. But what prevented her from recognising it all around her? Sir Richard knows of no books save hers "which suggest the possibility of a new kind of saint to meet the needs of our age." True, he happens on Hugh Dormer's *Diaries*—so the *material* may after all exist! "But (Simone) alone so far has possessed the intellectual maturity as well as the moral force to give form to the material." Alas, form she certainly does not provide; even her treatment of analogies "exactly as" identities shows lack of balance, and so, of maturity, and her self-starvation in London showed an obstinate self-will rather than moral force. Her increasing disdain for intellect did not really lead her towards mysticism. Thus to dispraise the confused philosophy which alone her tormented mind could reach implies no failure to recognise her astonishing qualities: doubtless she is now discerning the divine love that enwraps the world despite its injustice, lies and cruelty.

Divorce in England: A Centenary Study, by O. R. McGregor (Heinemann 188s).

"**DOGMA**" is one of those words which have come down in the world. Although still in high repute among Catholic theologians, it signifies for most people an unfounded opinion tenaciously held and arrogantly expressed.

Mr. McGregor does not bother to examine the various meanings attached to the term "Dogma," but he is very severe on dogmatists of all classes. He describes himself as "a social scientist." Objectivity, exact knowledge and cool reasoning are suggested. We expect anything but dogmatism.

But what do we find? It is asserted that the medieval canon law of marriage derived its principles from the fear of the pleasures of marriage. It is gravely announced that "The Roman clergy's pronouncements about sex are like those of lifelong teetotallers about drink, dogmatic but necessarily inexperienced." Presumably, also, like those of lawyers and judges about crime. We are told that the increasing

number of divorces does not demonstrate a decline in public respect for the institution of marriage. This surprising assertion is supported by the argument that marriage was never more popular than now, and that the marriage rate amongst divorced persons is higher than for any other marital condition. From this it would follow that the more divorced persons re-marry the greater the respect for the institution of marriage. Mr. McGregor explains that he does not mean the institution of Christian marriage, but that respect is "an acceptance of the personal and social responsibilities inherent in voluntary relationship between adults entered into with the intention of permanency." Here "respect" can only mean acceptance of these responsibilities at the moment of the marriage ceremony, not, necessarily, living up to them. Otherwise the argument from the mere number of marriages would be meaningless.

Mr. McGregor has many harsh things to say about the *Report of the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce*, issued in 1956. He accuses the Commissioners of identifying the social good with their personal presuppositions. He criticises the composition of the Commission. We are told that it lacked the essential assistance of—a social scientist.

Liturgies of the Primatial Sees, by Archdale A. King (Longmans 70s).
Liturgy of the Roman Church, by Archdale A. King (Longmans 42s).

THE STUDY of the liturgy has advanced a long way since 1930, when Mr. Archdale King compiled his *Notes on the Catholic Liturgies*, covering then in some two hundred and fifty pages the ground which now requires his close attention through two stout volumes. He writes with great sympathy for the diverse rites, Ambrosian and Mozarabic, with those of Braga and Lyons, and not at all in the spirit of Hildebrand, who spoke of the "superstitious errors of Toledo" and called down curses on the "sons of death" who had forged papal letters in defence of their rite. The work, aided by excellent photographs, is largely descriptive, but when opinions are given about the inter-relation of rites, they are in the main those of Edmund Bishop set forth some fifty years ago. There is a missing piece in the jig-saw of liturgical origins in the West, and if there had survived a rite of Clonmacnois or of Bangor, one might be in a better position to plan the line of descent of rites, and it might even appear that some of the so-called "Spanish symptoms" are really Celtic symptoms looked at the wrong way round. As it is, Mr. King has missed the intriguing mass-code from Milan, recently restored by Alban Dold, which seems to fall between Spain, Gaul and Ireland, and may turn out to be Breton in origin. On the Roman liturgy he has gathered his material widely, but it is sometimes not co-ordinated

sufficiently, so that opinions of high probability are set alongside the faded eccentricities of yesteryear, without sufficient aid being given for the reader to discriminate between them. Thus it is strange to read the old legend brought up again that the words *mysterium fidei* came into the consecration prayer because the deacon used to call them out loud as the priest consecrated. The abundance of information supplied will however be generally appreciated.

Gospel Meditations, by A. O'Rahilly (Browne and Nolan 18s).

DR. O'RAHILLY so well-known for the variety of his interests and writings, often quotes St. Thérèse of Lisieux as saying that she derives all that her soul needs from the Gospels, and his own lifelong study of them has led him to prepare a detailed, but as yet uncompleted, account of Our Lord's life. Meanwhile he has published one hundred "meditations" of a simple sort, such that all, clergy, religious or laity, may profit by them. His aim was to confine each meditation within two pages: when they "spilled over" somewhat, leaving a page largely blank, he has added brief notes in square brackets, often more rich in suggestion even than the preceding pages. Fr. M. C. D'Arcy in his Foreword recalls how Fr. Lagrange, O.P., put us for ever in his debt by his learned commentaries, and how M. Daniel-Rops built up the historical environment within which Our Lord lived, whereas Dr. O'Rahilly tries to allow the Gospels to speak for themselves so far as possible, although we cannot but feel that a great deal of studious preparation lies behind his simple sentences. Thus he sees that the crucified thief said: "Remember me when Thou comest *in* (not 'into') Thy glory"—i.e., at the Parousia, which gives point to the answer: "*Today* thou shalt be with Me. . .": the Knox version itself misses this. That he says that the soldier offered the sponge soaked with *posca* on a cane or *spear-shaft* implies that he accepts the well-known emendation of the word "hyssop" (John 19: 29)—rightly, we consider. Such tiny but significant instances could be multiplied. Dr. O'Rahilly never allows Our Lord's real humanity to be moralised away. He sees that Our Lady herself did not understand everything at once; she, too, had to *grow*. Holding on thus firmly to the two extremes, human and divine, his book will minister both to our knowledge and our devotion more than many do, written in a more traditionally pietistic tone.

The Letters of Nicodemus, by Jan Dobraczynski, translated and abridged from the Polish by H. C. Stevens (Heinemann 18s).

THE AUTHOR, not yet well-enough known in England, was born in 1910, fought as a cavalry officer in the Second War, was wounded, worked underground, was captured and held prisoner in

Belsen and elsewhere, and since his release in 1945 has devoted himself to writing: this is his first book to be translated into English though his works have appeared in some six other languages. This translation is fluent and dignified despite a few uncalled-for colloquialisms, full of passion without melodrama. We usually shrink from an amplification or decoration of the Gospels as such, but it can be very enlightening to be given an oblique view on the events recorded there, for example, as in this book, what they must have looked and sounded like to a secondary character like Nicodemus. In his letters to Justus, who had been his tutor, Nicodemus reveals the tortuous agonising progress of a Jewish soul from devout Pharisaism towards acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. The extreme reticence of the Gospels sometimes makes us feel as if only two or three personages spoke and acted in front of an immobile and silent background. The author makes us realise how tumultuous and uproarious was the surrounding of so much of Our Lord's public ministry; thus, when the evangelist says; during part of His trials, simply that "even so, their witness agreed not together," he justifiably expands this into a brilliant page. A remarkable and unusual section concerns Our Lady's prayer with and for the Apostles after her Son's death (she herself does not die, but is forthwith assumed into beatitude). We need not always agree with imaginative details, such as the earlier picture of St. Peter as a boorish giant, nor need we always agree with the chronological sequence of events as here set out: but a real erudition underlies the drama so vividly enacted. We acclaim the book for its own sake, but also, because it comes from Poland, whose history—not only its most recent chapters—covers us with shame, but then, lifts our heads up again in homage to its heroism.

Religion in the Irish System of Education, by John Mescal, M.A., LL.B. (Clonmore and Reynolds 24s).

The Incarnation in the University, edited by Vincent Buckley (Geoffrey Chapman, for Pax Romana, 7s 6d).

THE FIRST of these books sets out to explain how the Irish system of education attempts to fulfil the Christian ideal of the upbringing of youth: the second gives the judgment of a group of Catholics on full Christian life in a secular university. Both are concerned with efforts to carry on the work of the Incarnation.

The question: Where is education more backward, in England or in Ireland? would surprise the experts. English education, built up with good will, intelligence and lavish expenditure, is well on along the right road. It has fresh and efficient methods, highly trained teachers, and the best of equipment. Irish education lags a long way behind. Not only does lack of money hinder renovation and expansion and prevent

the payment of attractive salaries, but politics, nationalism and economics make a battleground out of the theory of education, with crippling consequences for those who need to be educated. So, the experts. Yet in English Education, based on secularism and dangerously insecure, the minority which holds to sound educational principles is penalised: but the Irish system is being built, slowly but securely, on a foundation of the responsibility of parents and Church to give children a genuine religious education with the full backing of the State. It would be well if all concerned with education in England would read Mr. Mescal's book and get their values right.

Secularism in education of the young produces the secular university, with its challenge to those Catholics in university life who accept responsibility for christianising their milieu. The Newman Society of Victoria, Australia, has done well to publish a set of papers on the Catholic apostolate in universities. Catholics willing to live their Christianity fully, in or out of universities, will find enlightenment and stimulus in this clear and earnest statement of the Christian ideal of life in and with Christ, in and with the neighbours.

The Lost Gods of England, by Brian Branston (Thames and Hudson 25s).

IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED that there is practically no direct evidence about English mythology as such. Iceland and Scandinavia have full written sagas, but these are late, and it is too risky to argue across to specifically English cults, especially as the English were converted to Christianity before they could write, and much of what is accessible shows a mingling of traditions or formulas. The book contains a great deal of learning, lightly dealt with, and inevitably put together by means of one hypothesis leaning on another. Unfortunately Mr. Branston not only makes a great deal of precarious theories of matriarchy, but considers that "Christianity adopted alien *ideas* again when in England missionary monks acted on the advice of Pope Gregory and incorporated local heathen customs into the conduct of the Christian year." As if Gregory would have confused customs with ideas, which anyhow could find no entrance by then into the fully articulated Christian creed! The "again" means that long ago "Christ was duelling with Attis and Adonis and especially Mithras": and later the author speaks of Christ "locked in a life and death struggle with Mithras": this story ought to have been buried with Renan. We end up with a protozoic female atom of life-slime reproducing itself parthenogenetically "as usual," but as a precedent bringing forth a new sex, male. This was the first fatal step towards undermining its own (the female's) authority. Today, however, women in Western Europe

have been emancipated, in the U.S.A. women are regaining their natural position; and since the proclamation in 1950 of the "bodily ascent" of the Virgin Mary, it seems clear that "so far as ordinary Catholics are concerned, the Great Goddess has once more taken up her position of superiority." But since "organised Christianity is dying a lingering death," and Man himself is being smothered by material life, we must make our peace with nature—for the Great Goddess is ultimately nature, and reach a symbiotic relationship with all else in the world." "Some such was the aim of our ancestors, and we should ponder on how they attempted to reach it."

The Anvil of Civilisation, by Leonard Cottrell (Faber 25s).

MR. COTTRELL has wished to make an outline of the birth, development and inter-relationship of the ancient civilisations of Western Asia and the Mediterranean, 4000-400 B.C." He modestly protests that his is a "quest": he is seeking a pattern. Though not a specialist (perhaps he is most "at home" in ancient Egypt), his learning is great and he has travelled to many of the sites he describes; yet he wishes his book to be easily readable, picturesque and he does not disdain, here and there, the frivolous. He does not describe the civilisations within the area, Egypt to Caspian and Mesopotamia to Mediterranean, one after the other, but, so far as possible, side by side and interfusing and finally (to some extent) affecting the Greeks and so, ourselves. His high ambition inevitably causes parts of his book to be heavy-going and others, sketchy. We doubt if he detects the continuity of tradition throughout Hebrew-Jewish religion; and, given his time-limits, he cannot adequately discuss the Greeks, or do more than allude to the unforeseen, such as the apparition of Rome; nor at all to the barbarian invasions of Islam; nor the modern social and industrial revolutions or machinery, which affect us so much that we may fear for the future of all culture deserving the name, and bequeathed to us by Jerusalem, Athens and Rome, let alone by the civilisations Mr. Cottrell has here studied. We don't want to become zombies.

The Two-Edged Sword, An Interpretation of the Old Testament, by John L. McKenzie, S.J. (Bruce \$4.50).

THE DUST-JACKET quite rightly claims that this book "will challenge scholars and delightfully instruct the general reader." *The Two-Edged Sword* faces with rare candour and intelligence the problems posed by the Old Testament and reconstructs the Hebrew mentality and climate of thought with such skill and historical imagi-

nation that these problems almost disappear. Fr. McKenzie makes good use of the recent archaeological finds at Ras Shamra in his account of the religion and culture of Canaan, Babylon and Assyria, but it is when discussing the Hebrew thought forms and literary kinds that he is at his best. Innocent of scientific history, the Hebrews were masters of the story-teller's art, in which imagination and the selection and high-lighting of the significant have their place; a painting can be more "true" than a photograph. Perhaps in a later edition Fr. McKenzie will give us a more exact statement of the questions of God's self-revelation in history and the relation of morality to religion. Though not flawless, this is a distinguished and very helpful book: lively, scholarly, liberating.

A Profest Papist: Bishop John Gordon, by T. F. Taylor (Church Historical Society; S.P.C.K. 7s 6d).

MR. TAYLOR has developed the theory of the late Gregory Dix, first crystallised in 1948, that the Holy Office, in its enquiry in 1704 into the convert Bishop of Galloway's Orders, was misled: Gordon had not been ordained by the 1662 Anglican Ordinal, but—if at all—by another, perhaps the 1620 Scottish Ordinal. But, we may ask, if the case was judged on the 1662 Ordinal, was not that Ordinal thereby condemned? Yet the real point lies elsewhere. The novelty of the case, the first for 150 years, was Gordon's consecration, not his ordination. What we know of his consecration points to a Scottish Ordinal of 1636, revised in accordance with Anglican standards by agreement of Charles, Laud and Wedderburn. Mr. Taylor's painstaking but confusing booklet, silent on this, furnishes us with some new though unimportant details: the assessment of Gordon's character must await a fuller and less superficial study.

The Catholic Concise Encyclopedia, compiled and edited by R. C. Broderick M.A. (Catechetical Guild Educational Society \$1.95).

DESPITE the explanation in the Introduction of what was excluded from the book, e.g., condensed biographies, and that a "break-down of subjects" was made so as to allot a due percentage to theology and literature rather than to, e.g., architecture, we doubt the value of notes on Abbacomites, Abbeylubber, Abraxas and the like, especially as the book is intended for ordinary readers. On the back of the rather garish cover, it is said to be "fascinating to just wander through." There are many line-drawings by Ade de Bethune in a pleasant buff colour, though we doubt whether a picture of a "ferula" (a short cane, or crutch) is very illuminative. In short, the book may certainly invite readers of good will to seek fuller information elsewhere.

The Stuarts, by Sir Charles Petrie, Bt. (Eyre and Spottiswoode 25s).

THIS is a reprint of a work which originally appeared in 1937 and deals, with the emphasis on the personal and social aspect rather than the political, with the Stuart sovereigns of England from the accession of James I and VI in 1603 to the Revolution of 1688. The author's aim, as he states in the Preface, is "to show how the subjects of the Stuarts were affected by, and how they regarded, the chief events of their day," and this, by a liberal use of quotations from contemporary letters and diaries, he may be said very successfully to have achieved. It is pleasant also to acclaim one who on the one hand is not ashamed of quoting Belloc among his authorities nor on the other is daunted by the idea of crossing swords with Sir Winston in defence of the much-maligned King James II.

The book is well illustrated by a number of portraits and contemporary prints. Attention may be drawn to an error in the spelling of the name Buccleuch.

Northcliffe: Napoleon of Fleet Street, by Harry J. Greenwall (Allan Wingate 21s).

ALFRED HARMSWORTH belonged to that small company of men who radically altered the habits of modern society through their genius for using changing social conditions. Harmsworth, the eldest of fourteen children of a Dublin barrister, became Northcliffe, most-colourful of all Barons of the popular Press. Dominant and domineering, he bestrode Carmelite Street and, for a time also, Printing House Square like a veritable Colossus. He did more than any of his contemporaries to bring the weekly and later the daily papers to the level of the millions and to tickle his readers' palates with every variety of competition, stunt and sensation. He was big and blatant in his methods, his achievements and his defects. His incursions into political life and Downing Street were also in the grand manner, though touched with the *grandeur de la folie*. His career was meteoric and it burnt itself out, meteorwise, in the last splutterings of an exhausted, deranged mind.

Mr. Greenwall's story of Lord Northcliffe is light and readable. Journalism rather than literature, it is studded with some good journalistic anecdotes. The style slips easily into the staccato of news reporting and lapses on occasions into a racy slang. And now and then, the central character seems to be lost in the jungle of amusing incidents. However, it remains a very readable account of an extraordinary man whose energy and initiative have left their impress on modern Britain. For better or worse—a case could be made out for either alternative or perhaps for both at the same time—Britain after Northcliffe could never be again what it was before. The picture drawn by Mr. Greenwall is sympathetic on the whole but not uncritical.

The Editor, THE MONTH.

SIR,

I was mildly astonished by the article in *THE MONTH* dated February 1958, in which Mr. W. J. Battersby reviewed his own *life* of *St. John Baptist de La Salle* together with my biography of *John Locke*. Though he did justice to himself Mr. Battersby did less than justice to me. Notably he represented me as a champion of religious persecution. I do assuredly suggest in that book the reasons *Locke* might have offered for *his* acquiescence in the evils of the "Popish Plot" proceedings; but my own disapproval of *Locke's* attitude is made abundantly clear. Mr. Battersby writes of "the lengths to which *Locke's* apologist is driven to explain the conduct and to justify this disgraceful episode in English history which cost the lives of no fewer than twenty-one innocent men."

I am *not* *Locke's* apologist: I do *not* justify that episode: it is a cruel libel to state that I do. However, as I believe Dr. Johnson once said, one can always bear abuse so long as it is not true.

Yours etc.,

MAURICE CRANSTON

The Rev. W. J. Battersby writes:

I AM very sorry to see that Mr. Cranston has misinterpreted my article in your last issue. It was not intended either as a review of my own book or as a criticism of his; it was, as I tried to make clear, a comparison between the two persons who form the subjects of his biography and mine respectively. We now have two full-size portraits, so to speak, of two great contemporaries, and I felt that they invited comparison; the persons, I mean, not the biographies as such.

I am so far from wishing to criticise Mr. Cranston's work that I might say quite plainly that I admire his biography immensely. It interested me all the more as I came to realise that we must both have been working on parallel subjects at exactly the same time. I have alluded to John Locke more than once in my own work, and I am sorry I did not know that he was dealing with the subject at the time. That Mr. Cranston should think that I wished to represent him as a champion of religious persecution is a complete misunderstanding. I esteem that it is perfectly in order for Mr. Cranston, as *Locke's* biographer, to offer whatever explanation or excuses he can for *Locke's* conduct with regard to the Popish Plot. In the passage he quotes I merely meant to show how difficult it was for him to find a justification for it. I did not mean that he, personally, must have thought it justified.

ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background

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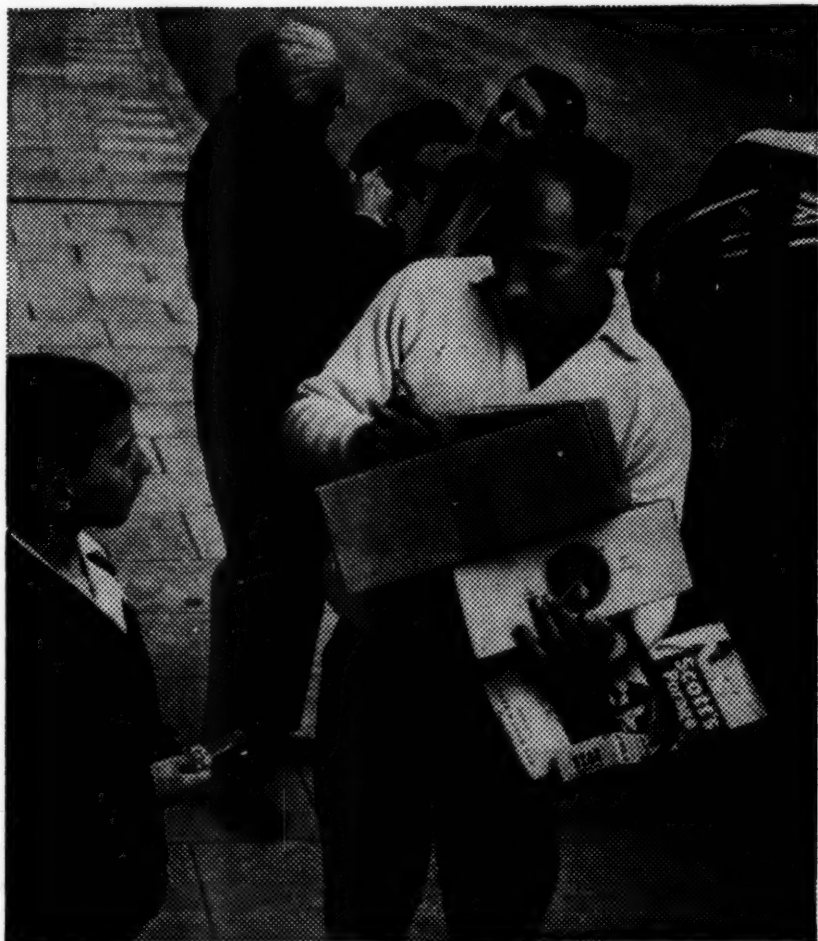
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